Commentary
February 2008

Stopping Iran: Why the Case for Military Action Still Stands

Norman Podhoretz

Look Who's Afraid of Free Trade

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The Hollywood Musical Done Right

Terry Teachout

Books in Review

David Hazony • Dan Seligman • Arch Puddington
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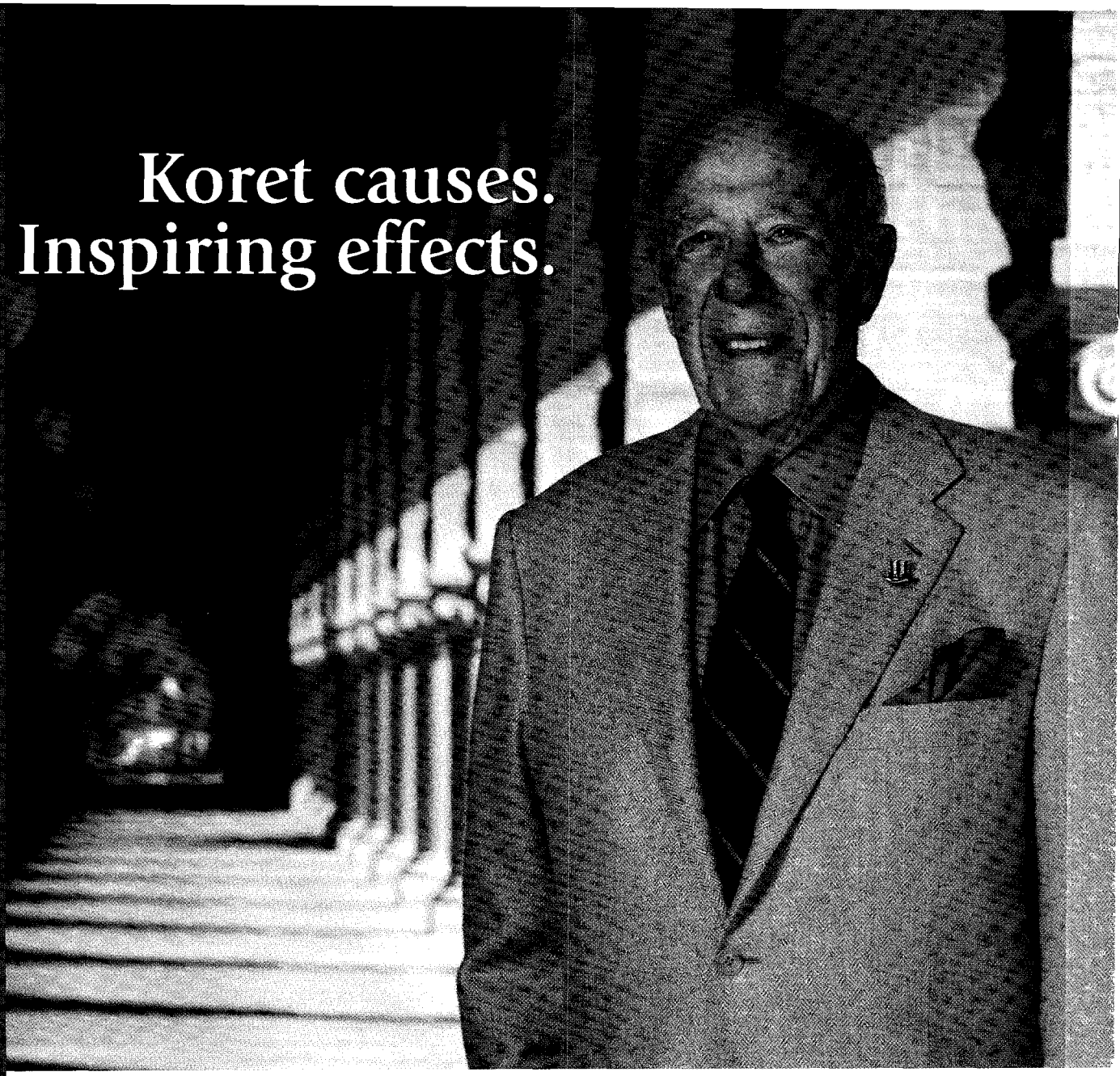

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Letters from Readers

Totalitarian Olympics

To the Editor:

Arch Puddington's discussion of the 1936 Olympics in Nazi Germany and the 1980 Olympics in Soviet Russia provides some useful historical context for those puzzled over the decision of the International Olympic Committee to name Beijing as host of the 2008 Olympics ["China Games," November 2007]. He is certainly right to argue that this year's games promise to write another shameful chapter in the annals of the sporting competition.

The People's Republic is a rising power, with a deep sense of historical grievance and entitlement, and is looking to take its place in the sun. The 21st century, in the minds of the leadership of the Chinese Communist party (CCP), is China's century. Granting the party stewardship over the Olympics is read by them as a global validation of that vision.

It is not intrinsically bad to grant a rising power the honor of hosting the Olympics—we would have less discomfort with India—but granting the PRC the Olympics also validates another assumption held by its rulers, to which Mr. Puddington alludes: that the PRC pays no price for the human-rights abuses that it commits at home and supports abroad.

The PRC has been using its newfound power not only to ward off condemnation of its repressive government but also to support some of the world's worst regimes. A Burmese junta without the support of the PRC would not have a long lifespan; neither would Kim Jong Il of North Korea, Karimov of Uzbekistan, or Bashir of Sudan. Ahmadinejad of Iran would be a little less confident if it were not for PRC largesse. The CCP also provides cover for dictators to argue that they can expand their economies without liberalizing their governments.

Contrary to the hopes of sincere democrats, the Olympics do not appear to be "opening up" China. Last year, Beijing gave a little taste of how it intends to handle the delicate issue of "social harmony" during the games. Before the National People's Congress of March 2007, 700 individuals were rounded up and detained in a preemptive strike aimed at avoiding protests or demonstrations. Beijing has also increased its surveillance of overseas nongovernmental organizations and contact with them by Chinese citizens, and journalists who have covered protests by Beijing residents against the demolition of their homes have been mistreated.

Whether such tactics will work as the foreign press pours into China during the Olympics remains to be seen. It is hard to imagine how the CCP will continue to win the cat-and-mouse game of cracking down on dissent at a time of such expansion in the technical means of communication. In any case, repression of an industrious and angry people is a difficult and potentially explosive proposition. President Bush and the members of his cabinet who attend the Olympics will have to sit uncomfortably in the stands in Beijing as the machine of repression serves up its show of "social harmony" for them.

Dan Blumenthal
American Enterprise Institute
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

I would like to add a footnote to Arch Puddington's article. Unscrupulous Olympic officials like Avery Brundage and Charles Sherrill are not the only ones who share responsibility for the propaganda victory scored by Nazi Germany in its hosting of the 1936 Olympic games. The Roosevelt administration and significant segments of the American news media also

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deserve to be added to the list of enablers.

Many prominent newspaper editors and reporters allowed themselves to be taken in by the Third Reich's effort to improve its image on the eve of the games. "Zeus, in his golden days, never witnessed a show as grand as this," gushed a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, which ran an editorial predicting that the "spirit of the Olympiads" would "save the world from another purge of blood." The *New York Times*, which had earlier called for the U.S. to boycott the games, forecast that the Berlin games would facilitate "the undoubted improvement of world relations and general amiability."

The Roosevelt administration, which in the early years of the 1930's was interested in maintaining friendly relations with Germany, refused to express any opposition to American participation in the Nazi Olympics, claiming it could not "interfere with the freedom of decision" of the American Olympic Committee. Roosevelt evidently believed his position to have been vindicated by the fact that visitors to Germany (as he told Rabbi Stephen S. Wise after the games) "tell me that they saw that the synagogues were crowded, and apparently there is nothing very wrong."

By not only supporting America's participation in the 2008 games but also accepting China's invitation to attend personally, President Bush steps into a controversy that carries disturbing reminders of 1936. Will he learn from FDR's mistake and speak out, in China, against Beijing's human-rights abuses and its support for the genocidal government of Sudan?

RAFAEL MEDOFF
David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies
Washington, D.C.

ARCH PUDDINGTON writes:

I thank Dan Blumenthal and Rafael Medoff for their letters, and I agree with the points they make. It is worth noting that, thus far in the run-up to the Olympics, the press has done a creditable job in keeping the world informed about Beijing's failure to introduce political reforms or even make minimal gestures like amnesties for political prisoners. The fact that the world knows full well about the autocratic functioning of the Chinese system makes the continued enthusiasm for Beijing's role as host city, expressed by sports officials, corporate executives, and political leaders, all the more deplorable.

As bad as the decision to award the games to Beijing was, there may be worse to come. The 2014 Winter Olympics are scheduled to be held in Sochi, Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin is said to be personally responsible for the decision of the International Olympic Committee to select Russia over two democracies, Austria and South Korea. Yet even as the IOC was deliberating over its decision, Putin was moving to marginalize the political opposition, destroy media independence, and generally restrict the freedom of all who oppose his policies.

More to the point, Putin's Russia has a well-established record of threatening and bullying its neighbors. It has imposed an embargo on Georgia, launched a campaign of cyber-warfare against Estonia, and stationed troops on the territory of both Georgia and Moldova. As Russia's aggressive tendencies grow, it seems likely that the world will be faced with yet another infamous day for international sports when the Sochi games get under way.

Faith & Interfaith

TO THE EDITOR:

In "Faith in the Flesh" [November 2007], R.R. Reno reflects upon a Christian-Jewish intermarriage not unlike my own. Like Mr. Reno and his wife, my fiancé and I met with Rabbi James Ponet at Yale shortly after we were engaged, and the rabbi politely informed us that he would not be able to officiate at our wedding. We soon realized that the kind of rabbi who would agree to marry us was not one that we wanted to be married by—very Groucho Marx—but unlike Mr. Reno's wife, I would never have agreed to be married in a church. We found a neutral site, and our ceremony involved elements of the Book of Common Prayer and the traditional Jewish wedding.

Mr. Reno is correct that within the framework of American liberalism, an interfaith marriage is not nearly as remarkable as one between, say, a Young Republican and a Women's Studies major, but it is still a thorny proposition that can be discussed ad nauseam without comfortable conclusions being reached. My husband and I discussed many times how we might raise our children. At first, there was no question that they would be brought up as Jews. But three years after our wedding (still no children), he indicated that he would be unhappy if his offspring were not baptized. I was horrified. He saw the possibility for compromises where I instinctively saw only black and white. For the children to be baptized, I felt, would be an intolerable lie.

I recognize that if I had been so determined to raise fully Jewish children, I would not have married the man I did. But my husband is more open to Judaism than any other man I dated; his religious background and heritage make it possible for him to respect and admire my religious background. Our interfaith household is more religious than many secular Christian homes, and we believe (and hope) that our children will be richer for their mixed heritage.

As I now carry our first child, I am confident that she will be raised primarily as a Jew, but I suspect that our family will make more compromises than Mr. Reno's has. I believe my child will perceive herself as a Jew as much as I did while growing up in a Conservative Jewish household, and that if she is also involved with her father's religious observance it will enrich her rather than rob her of something. It would be ideal, I suppose, if we could all marry within our own faiths, but without restricting ourselves to an unusual degree in today's world, we cannot. Cultural freedom requires that we make these uncomfortable religious choices.

EVA GEERTZ
Boston, Massachusetts

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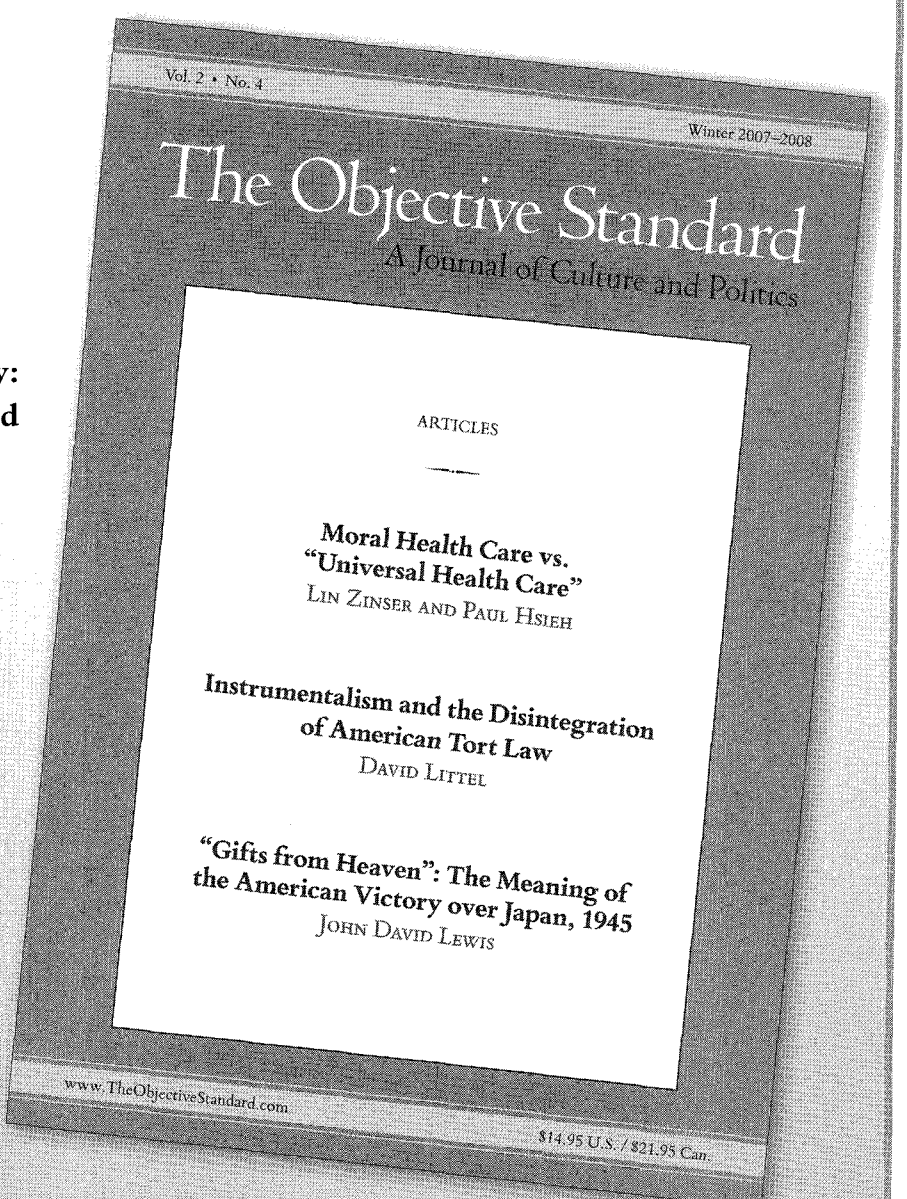
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TO THE EDITOR:

I applaud R.R. Reno for the honest and heartfelt manner in which he shares his family's story, and I commend him for recognizing the absurdity of attempting to raise his children in both Judaism and Christianity. Only those who have winnowed their faith to splinters could possibly believe the two could coexist in one soul.

Mr. Reno also recognizes that if his daughter's Jewish faith is to have any significant meaning, there will be moments in her life when he will be unable to stand at her side. What then? Will this child of intermarriage develop feelings of sorrow and anger toward the strictures of her faith? Will her relationship with her faith suffer? Her relationship with her father? One of these outcomes seems built into the whole experiment of intermarriage.

Given Mr. Reno's frank acknowledgment of such contradictions, and given his genuine respect for Judaism—as a faith, not simply for the "Jewish" platitudes tossed about in some corners of the culture—I am left wondering how he can rationalize the transgression of interfaith marriage at all. His explanations—"Love may not conquer all, but it has felled many young men"; "American liberalism . . . is like a cultural neutron bomb: the structures of ethnic and religious culture are left standing, but they are emptied of life"—will not do. The former differs little from the liberal bromide that what matters most is that a person be happy. The latter fails to acknowledge that American liberalism coexists with the most religious society in the industrialized world. Neither addresses the Jewish prohibition against interfaith marriage or the alarming shrinkage of the Jewish population.

"Faith in the Flesh" is thus best read as a cautionary tale. Those contemplating intermarriage who recognize (or feel they might someday recognize) the importance of their faith should take its lessons to heart.

L. MARK DEANGELIS
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR:

As a rabbi who aches at having to refuse to perform interfaith weddings, I was bowled over by R.R. Reno's essay. My thanks to him for his inspiring and brutal honesty, and my tears for him as he watches his own flesh and blood go forth where he does not—cannot—follow. That being said, I would add—with no disrespect intended but with an "ethnocentrism" that I hope is understood in the spirit in which it is expressed—that an individual with such a noble sensibility as his would be a blessing to the Jewish people.

RABBI CARY KOZBERG
Columbus, Ohio

R.R. RENO writes:

I thank Rabbi Cary Kozberg for his sympathetic reading of my story, and for his kind assessment of my character. Maybe if he knew me better, he would discover that I harbor cold, ironical, and skeptical tendencies that make me less than noble, and perhaps less of a blessing to the Jewish people.

I thank Eva Geertz for her letter, which gives me a pleasant opportunity for reveries of my own. I doubt that there is a right way to live as a Jew married to a Christian, but in any event, my wife is the one who should speculate, not me. Eva Geertz agrees that interfaith marriage at a place like Yale is less remarkable than ideological mixing. I should report that my wife's friends were far more shocked by the fact that she married while still an undergraduate than by our interfaith union. Jews could marry Catholics, and Democrats could even marry Republicans, but it was positively antediluvian to marry so young. How deliciously transgressive it was at the time!

Eva Geertz also gives me pause. She would like to believe that her children will be richer for their mixed heritage. This is a liberal truism that is not true. There is nothing in breadth alone that necessarily conveys richness of character or experience. On the contrary, I am more and more inclined to think that it leads either to confusion or to a sophisticated superficiality. Richness of character is like that of color: it comes from depth and intensity. I would like to think that my children have benefited from being raised by religiously serious parents. But that atmosphere of seriousness cannot but be softened and blunted by intermarriage.

This is a reality that all of us who are intermarried and who care about the religious lives of our children must face up to. For that matter, it also bears on my own capacity to sustain a serious faith. As I look back, I see that I probably have been driven to a more intense (and perhaps more rigid) faith in part because I saw that the alternative was an increasingly lax and flexible approach that better accorded with the many small compromises my wife and I have had to make. Intermarriage is a spiritually perilous undertaking.

I am fairly sure I would agree in large part with L. Mark DeAngelis if we had a conversation about religion and culture, but I must say that his letter baffles me. I did not set out to "rationalize" anything in my essay, least of all intermarriage. It is a fact that my wife and I live as we do. It is not a theological position.

The same holds for my daughter, and here I find myself getting somewhat angry with Mr. DeAngelis and his pat assumption that she will either resent Judaism or resent her father. People are more complicated than that. My daughter certainly is. So am I. She is much more likely to resent my distracted and preoccupied professorial personality—the self-important selfishness of the scholar—than my Christianity. Mr. DeAngelis wants to read "Faith in the Flesh" as a cautionary tale. By all means. But here my cold, skeptical side wishes to give Mr. DeAngelis advice: read all of life as a cautionary tale—and as a story of blessings, many unexpected and in spite of our penchant for transgression.

Afghanistan's Jews

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you for sharing Rosanne Klass's essay about the Jews of Afghanistan with your distinguished audience ["In the Tents of Kabul," October 2007]. I have been

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familiar with her writing for some time. She has truly been a bridge between the United States and Afghanistan, from well before the time when the latter entered the national vocabulary of the former.

Rosanne Klass tells of an Afghanistan very different from the country that we know today. The landscape that she describes is that of my own childhood: peaceful, bucolic, simple, tolerant. This is why throughout the decades many Afghans have discovered an earlier edition of her book about their country, *Land of the High Flags*, and recommended it to friends—to their Afghan friends as a reminder of what has been lost and to their American friends to show them the beauty of Afghan culture before our contemporary troubles began.

Rosanne Klass's encounter with Afghanistan's Jewish community was especially affecting. Most people do not know that Afghanistan was home to a vibrant Jewish community for centuries. This vital component of Afghan history and culture often escapes the attention of historians of the Middle East and South Asia, and remains a mere footnote in the study of world Jewry. The Afghan Jews whom I have been lucky enough to meet have recalled a culture of tolerance and respect in which they lived alongside their fellow citizens. They are proud of their Afghan heritage, and the tragedy of Afghanistan has been their tragedy as well. Many expressed a wish to return one day.

Today, Afghanistan's Jewish population stands at one, out of 30 million Afghans. This gentleman is the last living testament to over a thousand years of history and culture. However, a 1998 report by the International Survey of Jewish Monuments noted fresh Hebraic inscriptions made in pencil on the walls of the Yu Aw synagogue in Herat, suggesting that more Jews may be living in Afghanistan clandestinely.

To those who know the story of Afghanistan's Jews intimately, the history books cannot be considered complete unless they devote a chapter to the triumphs and struggles of our country's Jewish citizens.

SAID T. JAWAD
Ambassador of Afghanistan
Washington, D.C.

ROSANNE KLASS writes:

I was not aware of the graffiti found in the synagogue at Herat. It would be interesting to know what they said—and whether they are still there after another tumultuous decade. In any case, I thank Ambassador Jawad for his gracious comments. I am glad if my essay and my book can offer a glimpse of the Afghans as they were in better times past, and may someday be again, one hopes, in better times to come.

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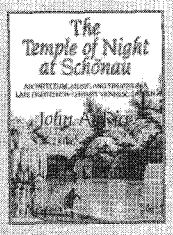

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Edwin Wolf 2nd and Kevin J. Hayes

(Joint publication with the American Philosophical Society and The Library Company of Philadelphia)

Benjamin Franklin's library, the largest and best private library at the time of his death in 1790, was sold by his grandson and subsequently sold again. None of the catalogues of the collection survive. In 1956, Edwin Wolf discovered the unique shelfmarks Franklin used to identify his books. His work to reconstruct a catalogue of the library was unfinished at the time of his death. Kevin J. Hayes took up the work as the tercentenary of Franklin's birth approached. Everything found to date, close to 4,000 entries, is compiled here.

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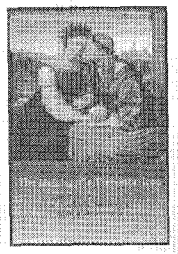

The Making of a Romantic Icon: The Religious Context of Friedrich Overbeck's Italia und Germania

Lionel Gossman

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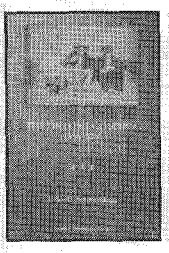

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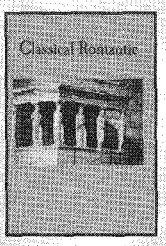

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Estelle Haan

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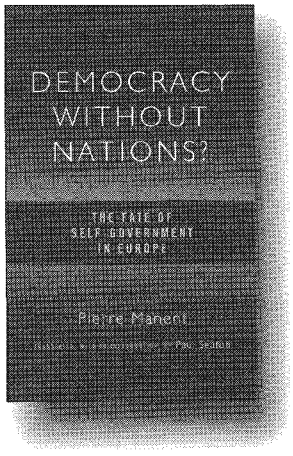

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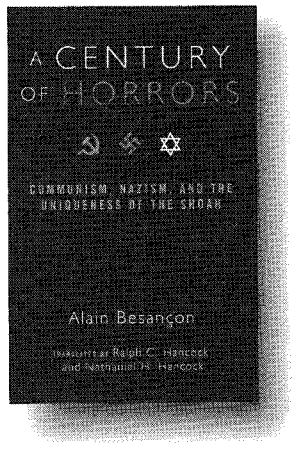

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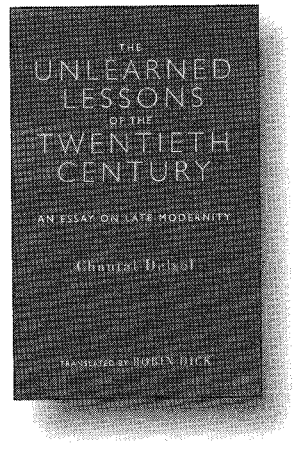

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Commentary
February 2008

Stopping Iran: Why the Case for Military Action Still Stands

Norman Podhoretz

UP UNTIL a fairly short time ago, scarcely anyone dissented from the assessment offered with "high confidence" by the National Intelligence Estimate [NIE] of 2005 that Iran was "determined to develop nuclear weapons." Correlatively, no one believed the protestations of the mullahs ruling Iran that their nuclear program was designed strictly for peaceful uses.

The reason for this near-universal consensus was that Iran, with its vast reserves of oil and natural gas, had no need for nuclear energy, and that in any case, the very nature of its program contradicted the protestations.

Here is how *Time* magazine put it as early as March 2003—long before, be it noted, the radical Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had replaced the putatively moderate Mohamed Khatami as president:

> On a visit last month to Tehran, International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] director Mohamed ElBaradei announced he had discovered that Iran was constructing a facility to enrich uranium—a key component of advanced nuclear weapons—near Natanz. But diplomatic sources tell *Time* the plant is much further along than previously revealed. The sources say work on the plant is "extremely advanced" and involves "hundreds" of gas centrifuges ready to produce enriched uranium and "the parts for a thousand others ready to be assembled."

So, too, the Federation of American Scientists about a year later:

> It is generally believed that Iran's efforts are focused on uranium enrichment, though there are some indications of work on a parallel plutonium effort. Iran claims it is trying to establish a complete nuclear-fuel cycle to support a civilian energy program, but this same fuel cycle would be applicable to a nuclear-weapons development program. Iran appears to have spread their nuclear activities around a number of sites to reduce the risk of detection or attack.

And just as everyone agreed with the American intelligence community that Iran was "determined to develop nuclear weapons," everyone also agreed with President George W. Bush that it must not be permitted to succeed. Here, the reasons were many and various.

To begin with, Iran was (as certified even by the doves of the State Department) the leading sponsor of terrorism in the world, and it was therefore reasonable to fear that it would transfer nuclear technology to terrorists who would be only too happy to use it against us. Moreover, since Iran evidently aspired to become the hegemon of the

NORMAN PODHORETZ *is the editor-at-large of* COMMENTARY *and the author most recently of* World War IV: The Long Struggle Against Islamofascism *(Doubleday). His article, "The Case for Bombing Iran," appeared in the June 2007* COMMENTARY.

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Middle East, its drive for a nuclear capability could result (as, according to the *New York Times*, no fewer than 21 governments in and around the region were warning) in "a grave and destructive nuclear-arms race." This meant a nightmarish increase in the chances of a nuclear war. An even greater increase in those chances would result from the power that nuclear weapons—and the missiles capable of delivering them, which Iran was also developing and/or buying—would give the mullahs to realize their evil dream of (in the words of Ahmadinejad) "wiping Israel off the map."

Nor, as almost everyone also agreed, were the dangers of a nuclear Iran confined to the Middle East. Dedicated as the mullahs clearly were to furthering the transformation of Europe into a continent where Muslim law and practice would more and more prevail, they were bound to use nuclear intimidation and blackmail in pursuit of this goal as well. Beyond that, nuclear weapons would even serve the purposes of a far more ambitious aim: the creation of what Ahmadinejad called "a world without America." Although, to be sure, no one imagined that Iran would acquire the capability to destroy the United States, it was easy to imagine that the United States would be deterred from standing in Iran's way by the fear of triggering a nuclear war.

Running alongside the near-universal consensus on Iran's nuclear intentions was a commensurately broad agreement that the regime could be stopped from realizing those intentions by a judicious combination of carrots and sticks. The carrots, offered through diplomacy, consisted of promises that if Iran were (in the words of the Security Council) to "suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, to be verified by the IAEA," it would find itself on the receiving end of many benefits. If, however, Iran remained obdurate in refusing to comply with these demands, sticks would come into play in the form of sanctions.

And indeed, in response to continued Iranian defiance, a round of sanctions was approved by the Security Council in December 2006. When these (watered down to buy the support of the Russians and the Chinese) predictably failed to bite, a tougher round was unanimously authorized three months later, in March 2007. When these in turn failed, the United States, realizing that the Russians and the Chinese would veto stronger medicine, unilaterally imposed a new series of economic sanctions—which fared no better than the multilateral measures that had preceded them.

WHAT THEN to do? President Bush kept declaring that Iran must not be permitted to get the bomb, and he kept warning that the "military option"—by which he meant air strikes, not an invasion on the ground—was still on the table as a last resort. On this issue our Western European allies were divided. To the surprise of many who had ceased thinking of France as an ally because of Jacques Chirac's relentless opposition to the policies of the Bush administration, Nicholas Sarkozy, Chirac's successor as president, echoed Bush's warning in equally unequivocal terms. If, Sarkozy announced, the Iranians pressed on with their nuclear program, the world would be left with a choice between "an Iranian bomb and bombing Iran"—and he left no doubt as to where his own choice would fall. On the other hand, Gordon Brown, who had followed Tony Blair as prime minister of the UK, seemed less willing than Sarkozy to contemplate military action against Iran's nuclear installations, even as a last resort. Like the new chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, Brown remained—or professed to remain—persuaded that more diplomacy and tougher sanctions would eventually work.

This left a great question hanging in the air: when, if ever, would Bush (and/or Sarkozy) conclude that the time had come to resort to the last resort?

Obviously the answer to that question depended on how long it would take for Iran itself to reach the point of no return. According to the NIE of 2005, it was "unlikely . . . that Iran would be able to make a nuclear weapon . . . before early-to-mid next decade"—that is, between 2010 and 2015. If that assessment, offered with "moderate confidence," was correct, Bush would be off the hook, since he would be out of office for two years at the very least by the time the decision on whether or not to order air strikes would have to be made. That being the case, for the remainder of his term he could continue along the carrot-and-stick path, while striving to ratchet up the pressure on Iran with stronger and stronger measures that he could hope against hope might finally do the trick. If he could get these through the Security Council, so much the better; if not, the United States could try to assemble a coalition outside the UN that would be willing to impose really tough sanctions.

Under these circumstances, there would also be enough time to add another arrow to this nonmilitary quiver: a serious program of covert aid to dissident Iranians who dreamed of overthrowing the mullocracy and replacing it with a democratic

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regime. Those who had been urging Bush to launch such a program, and who were confident that it would succeed, pointed to polls showing great dissatisfaction with the mullocracy among the Iranian young, and to the demonstrations against it that kept breaking out all over the country. They also contended that even if a new democratic regime were to be as intent as the old one on developing nuclear weapons, neither it nor they would pose anything like the same kind of threat.

All well and good. The trouble was this: only by relying on the accuracy of the 2005 NIE would Bush be able in all good conscience to pass on to his successor the decision of whether or when to bomb the Iranian nuclear facilities. But that estimate, as he could hardly help knowing from the CIA's not exactly brilliant track record, might easily be too optimistic.

To start with the most spectacular recent instance, the CIA had failed to anticipate 9/11. It then turned out to be wrong in 2002 about Saddam Hussein's possession of weapons of mass destruction, very likely because it was bending over backward to compensate for having been wrong in exactly the opposite direction in 1991, when at the end of the first Gulf war the IAEA discovered that the Iraqi nuclear program was far more advanced than the CIA had estimated. Regarding that by now notorious lapse, Jeffrey T. Richelson, a leading (and devoutly nonpartisan) authority on the American intelligence community, writes in *Spying on the Bomb*:

> The extent that the United States and its allies underestimated and misunderstood the Iraqi program [before 1991] constituted a "colossal international intelligence failure," according to one Israeli expert. [IAEA's chief weapons inspector] Hans Blix acknowledged "that there was suspicion certainly," but "to see the enormity of it is a shock."

And these were only the most recent cases. Gabriel Schoenfeld, a close student of the intelligence community, offers a partial list of earlier mistakes and failures:

> The CIA was established in 1947 in large measure to avoid another surprise attack like the one the U.S. had suffered on December 7, 1941 at Pearl Harbor. But only three years after its founding, the fledgling agency missed the outbreak of the Korean war. It then failed to understand that the Chinese would come to the aid of the North Koreans if American forces crossed the Yalu river. It missed the outbreak of the Suez war in 1956. In September 1962, the CIA issued an NIE which stated that the "Soviets would not introduce offensive missiles in Cuba"; in short order, the USSR did precisely that. In 1968 it failed to foresee the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. . . . It did not inform Jimmy Carter that the Soviet Union would invade Afghanistan in 1979.

Richelson adds a few more examples of hotly debated issues during the cold war that were wrongly resolved, including "the existence of a missile gap, the capabilities of the Soviet SS-9 intercontinental ballistic missile, [and] Soviet compliance with the test-ban and antiballistic missile treaties." This is not to mention perhaps the most notorious case of all: the fiasco, known as the Bay of Pigs, produced by the CIA's wildly misplaced confidence that an invasion of Cuba by the army of exiles it had assembled and trained would set off a popular uprising against the Castro regime.

On Bush's part, then, deep skepticism was warranted concerning the CIA's estimate of how much time we had before Iran reached the point of no return. As we have seen, Mohamed ElBaradei, the head of the IAEA, had "discovered" in 2003 that the Iranians were constructing facilities to enrich uranium. Still, as late as April 2007 the same ElBaradei was pooh-poohing the claims made by Ahmadinejad that Iran already had 3,000 centrifuges in operation. A month later, we learn from Richelson, ElBaradei changed his mind after a few spot inspections. "We believe," ElBaradei now said, that the Iranians "pretty much have the knowledge about how to enrich. From now on, it is simply a question of perfecting that knowledge."

We also learn from Richelson that another expert, Matthew Bunn of Harvard's Center for Science and International Affairs, interpreted the new information the IAEA came up with in April 2007 as meaning that "whether they're six months or a year away, one can debate. But it's not ten years." This chilling estimate of how little time we had to prevent Iran from getting the bomb was similar to the conclusion reached by several Israeli experts (though the official Israeli estimate put the point of no return in 2009).

Then, in a trice, everything changed. Even as Bush must surely have been wrestling with the question of whether it would be on his watch that the decision on bombing the Iranian nuclear facilities would have to be made, the world was hit with a different kind of bomb. This took the form of an unclassified summary of a new NIE, published

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early last December. Entitled "Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities," this new document was obviously designed to blow up the near-universal consensus that had flowed from the conclusions reached by the intelligence community in its 2005 NIE.[1] In brief, whereas the NIE of 2005 had assessed "with high confidence that Iran currently is determined to develop nuclear weapons," the new NIE of 2007 did "not know whether [Iran] currently intends to develop nuclear weapons."

This startling 180-degree turn was arrived at from new intelligence, offered by the new NIE with "high confidence": namely, that "in fall 2003 Tehran halted its nuclear-weapons program." The new NIE was also confident—though only moderately so—that "Tehran had not restarted its nuclear-weapons program as of mid-2007." And in the most sweeping of its new conclusions, it was even "moderately confident" that "the halt to those activities represents a halt to Iran's entire nuclear-weapons program."

Whatever else one might say about the new NIE, one point can be made with "high confidence": that by leading with the sensational news that Iran had suspended its nuclear-weapons program in 2003, its authors ensured that their entire document would be interpreted as meaning that there was no longer anything to worry about. Of course, being experienced bureaucrats, they took care to protect themselves from this very accusation. For example, after dropping their own bomb on the fear that Iran was hell-bent on getting the bomb, they immediately added "with moderate-to-high confidence that Tehran at a minimum is keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons." But as they must have expected, scarcely anyone paid attention to this caveat. And as they must also have expected, even less attention was paid to another self-protective caveat, which—making doubly sure it would pass unnoticed—they relegated to a footnote appended to the lead sentence about the halt:

> For the purposes of this Estimate, by "nuclear-weapons program" we mean Iran's nuclear-weapon design and weaponization work and covert uranium conversion-related and uranium enrichment-related work; we do not mean Iran's declared civil work related to uranium conversion and enrichment.

Since only an expert could grasp the significance of this cunning little masterpiece of incomprehensible jargon, the damage had been done by the time its dishonesty was exposed.

The first such exposure came from John Bolton, who before becoming our ambassador to the UN had served as Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, with a special responsibility for preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Donning this hat once again, Bolton charged that the dishonesty of the footnote lay most egregiously in the sharp distinction it drew between military and civilian programs. For, he said,

> the enrichment of uranium, which all agree Iran is continuing, is critical to civilian *and* military uses [emphasis added]. Indeed, it has always been Iran's "civilian" program that posed the main risk of a nuclear "breakout."

Two other experts, Valerie Lincy, the editor of Iranwatch.org, writing in collaboration with Gary Milhollin, the director of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control, followed up with an explanation of why the halt of 2003 was much less significant than a layman would inevitably be led to think:

> [T]he new report defines "nuclear-weapons program" in a ludicrously narrow way: it confines it to enriching uranium at secret sites or working on a nuclear-weapon design. But the halting of its secret enrichment and weapon-design efforts in 2003 proves only that Iran made a tactical move. It suspended work that, if discovered, would unambiguously reveal intent to build a weapon. It has continued other work, crucial to the ability to make a bomb, that it can pass off as having civilian applications.

Thus, as Lincy and Milhollin went on to write, the main point obfuscated by the footnote was that once Iran accumulated a stockpile of the kind of uranium fit for civilian use, it would "in a matter of months" be able "to convert that uranium . . . to weapons grade."

YET, IN SPITE of these efforts to demonstrate that the new NIE did not prove that Iran had given up its pursuit of nuclear weapons, just about everyone in the world immediately concluded otherwise, and further concluded that this meant the military option was off the table. George Bush may

[1] Among the principal authors of the new NIE, an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* reported, were "three former State Department officials with previous reputations as 'hyper-partisan anti-Bush officials,' according to an intelligence source." Even without knowing this, a careful reader of the new NIE summary could easily tell that it had been written by opponents of the military option who, moreover, were not so sure that Iran was all that dangerous.

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or may not have been planning to order air strikes before leaving office, but now that the justification for doing so had been discredited by his own intelligence agencies, it would be politically impossible for him to go on threatening military action, let alone to take it.

But what about sanctions? In the weeks and months before the new NIE was made public, Bush had been working very hard to get a third and tougher round of sanctions approved by the Security Council. In trying to persuade the Russians and the Chinese to sign on, Bush argued that the failure to enact such sanctions would leave war as the only alternative. Yet if war was now out of the question, and if in any case Iran had for all practical purposes given up its pursuit of nuclear weapons for the foreseeable future, what need was there of sanctions?

Anticipating that this objection would be raised, the White House desperately set out to interpret the new NIE as, precisely, offering "grounds for hope that the problem can be solved diplomatically—without the use of force." These words by Stephen Hadley, Bush's National Security Adviser, represented the very first comment on the new NIE to emanate from the White House, and some version of them would be endlessly repeated in the days to come. Joining this campaign of damage control, Sarkozy and Brown issued similar statements, and even Merkel (who had been very reluctant to go along with Bush's push for another round of sanctions) now declared that it was

> dangerous and still grounds for great concern that Iran, in the face of the UN Security Council's resolutions, continues to refuse to suspend uranium enrichment. . . . The Iranian president's intolerable agitation against Israel also speaks volumes. . . . It remains a vital interest of the whole world community to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran.

As it happened, Hadley was right about the new NIE, which executed another 180-degree turn—this one, away from the judgment of the 2005 NIE concerning the ineffectiveness of international pressure. Flatly contradicting its "high confidence" in 2005 that Iran was forging ahead "despite its international obligations and international pressure," the new NIE concluded that the nuclear-weapons program had been halted in 2003 "primarily in response to international pressure." This indicated that "Tehran's decisions are guided by a cost-benefit approach rather than a rush to a weapon irrespective of the political, economic, and military costs."

Never mind that no international pressure to speak of was being exerted on Iran in 2003, and that at that point the mullahs were more likely acting out of fear that the Americans, having just invaded Iraq, might come after them next. Never mind, too, that religious and/or ideological passions, which the new NIE pointedly neglected to mention, have over and over again throughout history proved themselves a more powerful driving force than any "cost-benefit approach." Blithely sweeping aside such considerations, the new NIE was confident that just as the carrot-and-stick approach had allegedly sufficed in the past, so it would suffice in the future to "prompt Tehran to extend the current halt to its nuclear-weapons program."

The worldview implicit here has been described by Richelson (mainly with North Korea in mind) as the idea that "moral suasion and sustained bargaining are the proven mechanisms of nuclear restraint." Such a worldview "may be ill-equipped," he observes delicately,

> to accept the idea that certain regimes are incorrigible and negotiate only as a stalling tactic until they have attained a nuclear capability against the United States and other nations that might act against their nuclear programs.

True, the new NIE did at least acknowledge that it would not be easy to induce Iran to extend the halt, "given the linkage many within the leadership probably see between nuclear-weapons development and Iran's key national-security and foreign-policy objectives." But it still put its money on a

> combination of threats of intensified international scrutiny and pressures, along with opportunities for Iran to achieve its security, prestige, and goals for regional influence in other ways.

It was this pronouncement, and a few others like it, that gave Stephen Hadley "grounds for hope that the problem can be solved diplomatically." But that it was a false hope was demonstrated by the NIE itself. For if Iran was pursuing nuclear weapons in order to achieve its "key national-security and foreign-policy objectives," and if those objectives explicitly included (for a start) hegemony in the Middle East and the destruction of the state of Israel, what possible "opportunities" could Tehran be offered to achieve them "in other ways"?

So much for the carrot. As for the stick, it was no longer big enough to matter, what with the threat of military action ruled out, and what with the case for a third round of sanctions undermined

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by the impression stemming from the NIE's main finding that there was nothing left to worry about. Why worry when it was four years since Iran had done any work toward developing the bomb, when the moratorium remained in effect, and when there was no reason to believe that the program would be resumed in the near future?[2]

What is more, in continuing to insist that the Iranians must be stopped from developing the bomb and that this could be done by nonmilitary means, the Bush administration and its European allies were lagging behind a new consensus within the American foreign-policy establishment that had already been forming even before the publication of the new NIE. Whereas the old consensus was based on the proposition that (in Senator John McCain's pungent formulation) "the only thing worse than bombing Iran was letting Iran get the bomb," the emerging new consensus held the opposite—that the only thing worse than letting Iran get the bomb was bombing Iran.

What led to this reversal was a gradual loss of faith in the carrot-and-stick approach. As one who had long since rejected this faith and who had been excoriated for my apostasy by more than one member of the foreign-policy elites, I never thought I would live to see the day when these very elites would come to admit that diplomacy and sanctions had been given a fair chance and that they had accomplished nothing but to buy Iran more time.[3] The lesson drawn from this new revelation was, however, a different matter.

It was in the course of a public debate with one of the younger members of the foreign-policy establishment that I first chanced upon the change in view. Knowing that he never deviated by so much as an inch from the conventional wisdom of the moment within places like the Council on Foreign Relations and the Brookings Institution, I had expected him to defend the carrot-and-stick approach and to attack me as a warmonger for contending that bombing was the only way to stop the mullahs from getting the bomb. Instead, to my great surprise, he took the position that there was really no need to stop them in the first place, since even if they had the bomb they could be deterred from using it, just as effectively as the Soviets and the Chinese had been deterred during the cold war.

Without saying so in so many words, then, my opponent was acknowledging that diplomacy and sanctions had proved to be a failure, and that there was no point in pursuing them any further. But so as to avoid drawing the logical conclusion—namely, that military action had now become necessary—he simply abandoned the old establishment assumption that Iran must at all costs be prevented from developing nuclear weapons, adopting in its place the complacent idea that we could learn to live with an Iranian bomb.

In response, I argued that deterrence could not be relied upon with a regime ruled by Islamofascist revolutionaries who not only were ready to die for their beliefs but cared less about protecting their people than about the spread of their ideology and their power. If the mullahs got the bomb, I said, it was not they who would be deterred, but we.

So little did any of this shake my opponent that I came away from our debate with the grim realization that the President's continued insistence on the dangers posed by an Iranian bomb would more and more fall on deaf ears—ears that would soon be made even deafer by the new NIE's assurance that Iran was no longer hell-bent on acquiring nuclear weapons after all. There might be two different ideas competing here—one, that we could live with an Iranian bomb; the other, that there would be no Iranian bomb to live with—but the widespread acceptance of either would not only preclude the military option but would sooner or later put an end even to the effort to stop the mullahs by nonmilitary means.

AND YET there remained something else, or rather someone else, to factor into the equation: the perennially "misunderestimated" George W. Bush, a man who knew evil when he saw it and who had the courage and the determination to do battle against it. This was also a man who, far more than most politicians, said what he meant and meant what he said. And what he had said at least twice before was that if we permitted Iran to build a nuclear arsenal, people fifty years from now would look back and wonder how we of this generation could have allowed such a thing to happen,

[2] It is worth noting that a number of Israeli experts—including Ephraim Halevy, the former (and very dovish) director of the Mossad—were convinced that the halt had lasted only about two years, that the program had been resumed, probably in 2005, and that it was still up and running.

[3] That negotiation was merely a tactic used by Iran to buy time was not idle speculation. As we learn from Richelson: "Iranian nuclear negotiator Hassan Rouhani told his nation's Supreme Cultural Revolution Council in September 2005 that Iran, in dealing with the IAEA, had agreed to suspend activities only in areas where it was not experiencing technical problems, and that the Isfahan uranium-conversion facility was completed while negotiating with the [European Union]. Rouhan informed the council that 'while we were talking with the Europeans in Tehran, we were installing equipment in parts of the facility. . . . [B]y creating a calm environment, we were able to complete the work.'"

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and they would rightly judge us as harshly as we today judge the British and the French for what they did at Munich in 1938. It was because I had found it hard to understand why Bush would put himself so squarely in the dock of history on this issue if he were resigned to an Iran in possession of nuclear weapons, or even of the ability to build them, that I predicted in these pages, and went on predicting elsewhere, that he would not retire from office before resorting to the military option.

But then came the new NIE. To me it seemed obvious that it represented another ambush by an intelligence community that had consistently tried to sabotage Bush's policies through a series of damaging leaks and was now trying to prevent him from ever taking military action against Iran. To others, however, it seemed equally obvious that Bush, far from being ambushed, had welcomed the new NIE precisely because it provided him with a perfect opportunity to begin distancing himself from the military option.[4]

But I could not for the life of me believe that Bush intended to fly in the face of the solemn promise he had made in his 2002 State of the Union address:

> We'll be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons.

To which he had added shortly afterward in a speech at West Point: "If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long."

How, I wondered, could Bush not know that in the case of Iran he was running a very great risk of waiting too long? And if he was truly ready to run that risk, why, in a press conference the day after the new NIE came out, did he put himself in the historical dock yet again by repeating what he had said several times before about the judgment that would be passed on this generation in the future if Iran were to acquire a nuclear weapon?

> If Iran shows up with a nuclear weapon at some point in time, the world is going to say, what happened to them in 2007? How come they couldn't see the impending danger? What caused them not to understand that a country that once had a weapons program could reconstitute the weapons program? How come they couldn't see that the important first step in developing a weapon is the capacity to be able to enrich uranium? How come they didn't know that with that capacity, that knowledge could be passed on to a covert program? What blinded them to the realities of the world? And it's not going to happen on my watch.

"IT'S NOT going to happen on my watch." What else could this mean if not that Bush was preparing to meet "the impending danger" in what he must by now have concluded was the only way it could be averted?

The only alternative that seemed even remotely plausible to me was that he might be fixing to outsource the job to the Israelis. After all, even if, by now, it might have become politically impossible for us to take military action, the Israelis could not afford to sit by while a regime pledged to wipe them off the map was equipping itself with nuclear weapons and the missiles to deliver them. For unless Iran could be stopped before acquiring a nuclear capability, the Israelis would be faced with only two choices: either strike first, or pray that the fear of retaliation would deter the Iranians from beating them to the punch. Yet a former president of Iran, Hashemi Rafsanjani, had served notice that his country would not be deterred by the fear of retaliation:

> If a day comes when the world of Islam is duly equipped with the arms Israel has in its possession, . . . application of an atomic bomb would not leave anything in Israel, but the same thing would just produce damages in the Muslim world.

If this was the view of even a supposed moderate like Rafsanjani, how could the Israelis depend upon the mullahs to refrain from launching a first strike? The answer was that they could not. Bernard Lewis, the leading contemporary authority on the culture of the Islamic world, has explained why:

[4] A typically conspiratorial version of this view, circulating through the Middle East, holds that Bush actually *arranged* for the new NIE, as a cover for capitulating to Iran. Evidently acting on this interpretation, the Sunni regimes (including Saudi Arabia and Egypt) that were expected by Condoleezza Rice to form a coalition against Shiite Iran once the U.S. got the "peace process" going between Israel and the Palestinians (hence the meeting she arranged at Annapolis) have instead been scrambling in various ways to come to terms with Tehran. As Gerald Steinberg of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs pointed out: "Within two weeks following publication of the NIE report, . . . Egypt moved to improve relations with Iran." What was even more extraordinary, "Saudi Arabia welcomed Iranian President Ahmadinejad to Mecca." The effects of the NIE were also manifest in China, which "signed a major contract on energy development and supply with Iran," as well as in Russia, which, after stalling on a long-promised delivery, "quickly dispatched two shipments of nuclear fuel for the Bushehr nuclear reactor."

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> MAD, mutual assured destruction, [was effective] right through the cold war. Both sides had nuclear weapons. Neither side used them, because both sides knew the other would retaliate in kind. This will not work with a religious fanatic [like Ahmadinejad]. For him, mutual assured destruction is not a deterrent, it is an inducement. We know already that [the mullahs ruling Iran] do not give a damn about killing their own people in great numbers. We have seen it again and again. In the final scenario, and this applies all the more strongly if they kill large numbers of their own people, they are doing them a favor. They are giving them a quick free pass to heaven and all its delights.

Under the aegis of such an attitude, even in the less extreme variant that may have been held by some of Ahmadinejad's colleagues among the regime's rulers, mutual assured destruction would turn into a very weak reed. Understanding that, the Israelis would be presented with an irresistible incentive to preempt—and so, too, would the Iranians. Either way, a nuclear exchange would become inevitable.

What would happen then? In a recently released study, Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies argues that Rafsanjani had it wrong. In the grisly scenario Cordesman draws, tens of millions would indeed die, but Israel—despite the decimation of its civilian population and the destruction of its major cities—would survive, even if just barely, as a functioning society. Not so Iran, and not its "key Arab neighbors," particularly Egypt and Syria, which Cordesman thinks Israel would also have to target in order "to ensure that no other power can capitalize on an Iranian strike." Furthermore, Israel might be driven in desperation to go after the oil wells, refineries, and ports in the Gulf.

"Being contained within the region," writes Martin Walker of UPI in his summary of Cordesman's study, "such a nuclear exchange might not be Armageddon for the human race." To me it seems doubtful that it could be confined to the Middle East. But even if it were, the resulting horrors would still be far greater than even the direst consequences that might follow from bombing Iran *before* it reaches the point of no return.

In the worst case of this latter scenario, Iran would retaliate by increasing the trouble it is already making for us in Iraq and by attacking Israel with missiles armed with non-nuclear warheads but possibly containing biological and/or chemical weapons. There would also be a vast increase in the price of oil, with catastrophic consequences for every economy in the world, very much including our own. And there would be a deafening outcry from one end of the earth to the other against the inescapable civilian casualties. Yet, bad as all this would be, it does not begin to compare with the gruesome consequences of a nuclear exchange between Israel and Iran, even if those consequences were to be far less extensive than Cordesman anticipates.

Which is to say that, as between bombing Iran to prevent it from getting the bomb and letting Iran get the bomb, there is simply no contest.

BUT THIS still does not answer the question of who should do the bombing. Tempting as it must be for George Bush to sit back and let the Israelis do the job, there are considerations that should give him pause. One is that no matter what he would say, the whole world would regard the Israelis as a surrogate for the United States, and we would become as much the target of the ensuing recriminations both at home and abroad as we would if we had done the job ourselves.

To make matters worse, the indications are that it would be very hard for the Israeli air force, superb though it is, to pull the mission off. Thus, an analysis by two members of the Security Studies Program at MIT concluded that while "the Israeli air force now possesses the capability to destroy even well-hardened targets in Iran with some degree of confidence," the problem is that for the mission to succeed, all of the many contingencies involved would have to go right. Hence an Israeli attempt could end with the worst of all possible outcomes: retaliatory measures by the Iranians even as their nuclear program remained unscathed. We, on the other hand, would have a much bigger margin of error and a much better chance of setting their program back by a minimum of five or ten years and at best wiping it out altogether.

The upshot is that if Iran is to be prevented from becoming a nuclear power, it is the United States that will have to do the preventing, to do it by means of a bombing campaign, and (because "If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long") to do it soon.

When I first predicted a year or so ago that Bush would bomb Iran's nuclear facilities once he had played out the futile diplomatic string, the obstacles that stood in his way were great but they did not strike me as insurmountable. Now, thanks in large part to the new NIE, they have grown so formidable that I can only stick by my prediction with

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what the NIE itself would describe as "low-to-moderate confidence." For Bush is right about the resemblance between 2008 and 1938. In 1938, as Winston Churchill later said, Hitler could still have been stopped at a relatively low price and many millions of lives could have been saved if England and France had not deceived themselves about the realities of their situation. *Mutatis mutandis*, it is the same in 2008, when Iran can still be stopped from getting the bomb and even more millions of lives can be saved—but only provided that we summon up the courage to see what is staring us in the face and then act on what we see.

Unless we do, the forces that are blindly working to ensure that Iran will get the bomb are likely to prevail even against the clear-sighted determination of George W. Bush, just as the forces of appeasement did against Churchill in 1938. In which case, we had all better pray that there will be enough time for the next President to discharge the responsibility that Bush will have been forced to pass on, and that this successor will also have the clarity and the courage to discharge it. If not—God help us all—the stage will have been set for the outbreak of a nuclear war that will become as inescapable then as it is avoidable now.

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Look Who's Afraid of Free Trade

John Steele Gordon

OVER THE past year, the Democratic candidates for President have settled on two core themes. One is that the Iraq war was a disastrous foreign-policy error from which the country must be extricated expeditiously—a proposition on which they differ only in the details. The other represents less a policy conviction than a profound change in the basic political philosophy of the party ever since its founding in the late 1820's. As against one of their party's oldest traditions, the 2008 Democrats are in general agreement that free trade is no longer in the economic interests of the United States.

To justify this shift, all of the Democratic candidates point to the unacceptably high cost imposed by jobs going to low-wage countries, and the impact this has had on wages here. To reverse these alarming realities, all suggest that our national attitude toward trade policy must change. Thus, Hillary Clinton has called the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) "a mistake," even though her husband, fifteen years ago, made it a signature issue of the first year of his presidency and worked hard and successfully to get it through a reluctant Congress. Barack Obama, for his part, recently voted in the Senate against a new free-trade agreement with Central America and against a similar one with Peru, even though that country's GDP is less than 1 percent of that of the United States. "Our trade policy," John Edwards declares flatly, "has been bad for working Americans," while Dennis Kucinich, the most unabashedly left-wing of the candidates, merely extends the views of the others in proposing not only to cancel NAFTA but to pull the United States out of the World Trade Organization, one of the proudest achievements of post-World War II diplomacy.

To be sure, none of the Democrats has called for transforming the world's largest economy, with more than a quarter of global GDP, into a 21st-century Tokugawa Japan, walled off from the rest of the world. But their general position, if implemented, would inevitably lead to greatly diminished American overseas trade. That would profoundly affect every sector of the American economy, every region of the country, and the habits of every American household. More: it would lead to a decline in trade for most countries, with potentially catastrophic consequences for the world as a whole.

How did the party that throughout its long history has advocated the lowest possible impediments to free trade become the party that is afraid of free trade's effects? The answer to that question requires a brief look at the history of American trade and the politics behind it.

Like all colonies founded in the Western hemisphere by Europeans, those that would become the United States began as exporters of raw materials and importers of practically everything else. (Tobacco, rice, and deerskins were among the

JOHN STEELE GORDON, *here making his first appearance in* COMMENTARY, *is the author of* An Empire of Wealth: The Epic History of American Economic Power *(2004).*

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major exports of the Southern colonies; wheat, flour, furs, pig iron, and lumber of the Northern ones.) The mother country wanted to keep it that way. By the mid-18th century, as colonial economies were expanding and diversifying rapidly, Britain imposed tighter and tighter restrictions on them. Britain also forbade the colonies to engage in most direct trade with foreign countries, instead requiring that such trade pass through British middlemen and be subject to British tariffs.

These laws were a prime cause of the American Revolution, and were something of which the Founding Fathers were very mindful in writing the Constitution. While a tariff on imports from foreign countries was expected to be the major source of income for the federal government—as indeed it routinely was until World War I—they flatly forbade taxes on exports.

For most of the early years of the Republic, thanks to surging imports, federal revenues rose sharply and were in surplus. But when the British imposed a naval blockade on the U.S. during the War of 1812, domestic manufacturing came into its own, especially in the North. This would pose a problem when the war ended and the blockade with it. Facing intense competition from more established and more efficient British textile mills, the new American textile manufacturers lobbied for protection. They succeeded: a duty of twenty-five cents a yard effectively excluded cheap British cloth from the American market.

This may have helped the North, but the Southern states, which increasingly depended on shipping their raw cotton to both American and British mills while importing most manufactured goods, arose in opposition. In 1828, a new and considerably higher tariff, denounced by Southern politicians as a "Tariff of Abominations," caused the nation's first great secession crisis. Four years later, President Andrew Jackson, himself a Southerner, was able to defuse the crisis by upholding the constitutionality of tariffs while simultaneously pushing a lower tariff bill through Congress.

Enter the Democrats. Jackson had first run for the presidency in 1824, winning the popular vote but losing to John Quincy Adams in the House of Representatives when he failed to carry the electoral college. His supporters, who identified themselves with the interests of the common man, were dubbed Democratic-Republicans, soon shortened to Democrats. When Jackson trounced Adams in the election of 1828, the Democratic party was in business. Downward pressure on the tariff would henceforth and forever become one of its defining causes.

The party's identification with that cause was tested early by the need to raise federal revenues quickly in the Civil War. This led to a much higher tariff. By war's end, moreover, the political and economic landscape of the United States had been profoundly transformed. The South, the center of opposition to protectionism, was for a decade essentially an occupied country with little political influence. Meanwhile, the North had become an industrial powerhouse, and the new industrialists were aligned with the dominant and overwhelmingly Republican sources of political power in the post-Civil War era. The party and its backers saw to it that the tariff wall was maintained for decades—another defining cause, and one that would mark the key line of division between the two parties right down to the modern period.

Over time, the Democratic base came to encompass not only the stricken "Solid South" but the rapidly growing number of industrial workers and poor farmers who were hit hardest by the regressive effects of Republican-championed protectionism. William Jennings Bryan, who would be nominated by the Democrats for President three times beginning in 1896, got his start in national politics by his brilliant oratory against the tariff. His philosophy of a low tariff combined with the free coinage of silver—a means of inducing inflation to help debt-ridden farmers—would be the party's banner until the eve of World War I.

Of course, by Bryan's time, the American market was anything but static. With immigrants arriving in ever-increasing numbers—on average, nearly 900,000 a year between 1900 and 1914—and with the native-born population rapidly multiplying as well, the economy grew rapidly, ensuring competition despite the best efforts of capitalists to form cartels and monopolies. By 1900, thanks to "Yankee ingenuity" and the rapid adoption of new technology, the United States was able to produce most goods at a lower cost than European competitors.

If the tariff nevertheless stayed high in those decades, it was because of heavy lobbying from corporations loath to compete with foreign firms. Only when a dispute *within* the privately held Carnegie Steel Company led to the public release of documents showing the company's astonishing profits did the solid political wall against free trade begin to crack. In 1912, the Republicans split between President William Howard Taft and former President Theodore Roosevelt, enabling the Democrats to win control of both Congress and the

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White House. In 1913 they significantly lowered the tariff for the first time since the Civil War, and American trade increased.

It would not last. Republicans regained control in the election of 1920, raising the tariff once again although not to the heights seen before World War I. Those heights would return, however, after the election of 1928. Campaigning for the presidency, Herbert Hoover had promised farmers, already distressed because of excess food production, that he would sponsor legislation to protect them from cheaper foreign imports. Once in office, he summoned a special session of Congress to deal with his proposal, thereby setting off a classic feeding frenzy. Special interests descended on Capitol Hill, demanding protection from "unfair" competition.

With the crash in the stock market in October 1929 and a contracting economy, it became politically impossible to withstand the demands of even minor industries. The fateful result was the Smoot-Hawley tariff of 1930 (named for its chief sponsors, Republican Senator Reed Smoot of Utah and Republican Congressman W.C. Hawley of Oregon). Raising tariffs to the highest point in American history, Smoot-Hawley inevitably sparked a series of retaliatory tariffs by foreign nations on American goods. The resulting collapse in world trade brought it by 1939 to a lower point than in 1895. Regarded by most economic historians as among the chief causes of the Great Depression that swept the globe beginning in 1930, and nowhere more severely than in the United States, Smoot-Hawley has taken its place as one of the most disastrous acts of statecraft in the modern era.

The political consequences of Smoot-Hawley were no less enormous. In 1932, the near-total collapse of the American economy led to the election and successive re-elections of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and a reshaping of the political and ideological landscape. Chastened by the long experience of the 1930's, the policy of the United States since the end of World War II, through Democratic and Republican administrations alike, has principally been to negotiate lower tariffs and eventually to eliminate them and other barriers to trade.

THUS, AFTER World War II, the United States moved decisively to help rebuild a shattered Europe with the Marshall Plan and to construct a stable world monetary system with the Bretton Woods Agreement and the International Monetary Fund. In 1947, the Truman administration negotiated the establishment of GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, as a way of reducing tariffs and promoting world trade. (It became the World Trade Organization in 1995.) Every postwar administration has been involved in and supportive of these international negotiations.

The result was a steady increase in total world trade. Between 1950 and 1970, trade in agricultural products more than doubled, in mining products more than tripled, and in manufactured goods more than quintupled. The next decade would see even more spectacular increases. Overall, between 1950 and 2000, the world's exports of manufacturing, agricultural, and mining products increased by a factor of *eighty*. By contrast, world GDP, net of inflation, grew by a factor of only six.

To be sure, it was not only the steady reductions in tariffs and non-tariff barriers that brought about growth. Nor were the changes always to America's short-term benefit. By 1970, for example, one of the 20th century's most important inventions—the cargo container—was beginning radically to reduce the cost of shipping goods long distances by sea. With much briefer turnaround times for ships, much smaller crews of longshoremen, and radically reduced dockside pilferage, factories could be located in distant low-wage countries and their products could still be sold profitably at home. More and more labor-intensive goods, like clothing, now began to be manufactured abroad—a first step, in turn, in the economic launching of the so-called "Asian tigers" of South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore. The jet engine, which similarly reduced the cost of air shipment, made it possible to trade high-value products, like fresh flowers, worldwide as well.

Also by 1970, both Europe and Japan had fully recovered from the devastation of World War II. Their factories, being newer than American counterparts, were often both more productive and more innovative. The temporary American monopoly in high technology and capital-intensive industries like electronics and automobiles began to slip away, as did the country's trade surplus and financial dominance.

The combination of greatly lower shipping costs and increased foreign productivity produced the "rust belt," symbolizing the erosion of America's manufacturing base. The very heart of that base, the automobile industry, suffered especially. Needless to say, this led to renewed and intense political pressure for protection. While the free-trade consensus held, bilateral agreements were soon struck to freeze quantities of various goods exported to the United States, and voices were increasingly heard accusing foreign countries of dumping—i.e., selling products in the American market below cost.

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Through much of the 1970's and 80's, the United States, under intense competitive pressure from foreign countries, underwent an often agonizing economic restructuring. New and much more productive methods were adopted to produce goods that could compete with the flood of imports. Steel, which for a century had been the *sine qua non* of an industrialized economy, was a case in point. In 1974, 521,000 American steel workers were producing 99 million tons. In 2000, nearly exactly the same amount was being produced by only 151,000 workers.

At the same time as this profound restructuring in manufacturing was getting under way, an even more significant revolution was sweeping through the entire economy. The microprocessor—basically, a dirt-cheap computer on a chip—entered the marketplace in 1971. It has already changed the world more than any invention since the steam engine, and we have not yet begun to see the end of its effect, or even the end of the beginning. If the recovery of American manufacturing led to an expansion in output but not so much in jobs, the microprocessor has produced massive job creation, both in the software industry in particular and in services in general.

In short, capitalism's process of "creative destruction," to use Joseph Schumpeter's famous phrase, has been at work as never before in the American economy. Every year, about seven million jobs disappear in the United States, but many more than that are created. Since 1994 there has been a net creation of about 23 million jobs.

Still, all is not rosy—or is ever completely rosy. And this is where the politics of the Democratic party re-enter the picture. Not the least effect of the microprocessor has been a collapse in the price of worldwide telecommunications, a consequent explosion in their use, and, inevitably, an increasingly globalized economy. The automobile industry, to return to that, is now nearly wholly globalized. Although people still think of General Motors as an American company and Toyota as a Japanese one, that is true mostly in a nominal sense. While the corporate headquarters of the two companies and most of their stockholders are located in their respective countries, each manufactures vehicles all over the world from parts made in many countries.

Here at home, the resultant pinch has been felt most keenly by organized labor—the one major part of the American economy that did not benefit in the long run from the restructuring of the 70's and 80's, and that has suffered a severe diminution in membership. If, in 1953, 35 percent of American workers belonged to unions, today only 12 percent do, and that figure would be much lower were it not for the public sector, the one area of the economy that has seen a dramatic growth in union jobs. Nor is there any reason to think that the downward trend will change, especially given the pressures of globalization.

It is no surprise, then, that organized labor, once a bastion of free-trade advocacy, has become no less adamantly anti–free trade in recent decades. And although labor is a much less potent force in the American economy than it was in the immediate postwar years, it remains a major player in Democratic-party politics—able to provide massive numbers of "volunteers" to operate phone banks and supply other boots-on-the-ground aid to political candidates. In the meantime, the Democrats themselves, no longer the clear majority party in the country, have become increasingly more dependent on the political power of organized labor.

But labor organizations and their bread-and-butter concerns are not the only factor in today's growing Democratic animosity to free trade. Two others must be named, of which the first is NAFTA.

NAFTA was, from the beginning, an unusual trade agreement. Most such economic deals are struck either between two countries or among a group of countries sharing similar economic circumstances (like the European Union). But NAFTA involves three countries—the United States, Canada, and Mexico—occupying two starkly different sets of circumstances. The U.S. and Canada are highly developed nations with educated populations, high per-capita GDP, and stable currencies. Mexico boasts the world's 14th largest economy, but its per-capita GDP is much smaller than that of Canada or the United States and its wealth is much less evenly distributed. Although the Mexican oligarchy is among the richest in the world, there are vast numbers of both urban and rural poor, with about 47 percent of the latter at subsistence level.

One of the main arguments for ratifying NAFTA was that it would stimulate Mexico's economy to the point where it would begin swiftly to converge with those of the United States and Canada. By thus transforming Mexico into a first-world country, NAFTA would greatly reduce the pressure on impoverished Mexicans to migrate to the United States in search of a better life. What happened was more complicated than that.

No sooner had the agreement come into force in 1994 than Mexico suffered a severe financial crisis and a radical contraction of its economy. Thanks to

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an international rescue effort crafted by President Clinton, and the growth in exports fostered by NAFTA, the crisis ended in 1996 and the economy began growing again. Indeed, in nominal terms, Mexican GDP has approximately doubled in the last ten years, poverty has fallen significantly, and exports have been surging. Mexico is now one of the world's leading trading nations and the biggest in Latin America, surpassing even Brazil.

On the basis of these encouraging results, there is reason to speculate that in the long run Mexico will emerge as a modern industrial and even post-industrial economy. But it was naive, if not disingenuous, to suppose that the evolution from a semi-developed into a full-fledged modern capitalist economy would occur in only a few years. The promise of a rapid convergence that did not occur is what has allowed critics of NAFTA to claim, however wrongly, that it has been a failure.

Still worse, from the political point of view, is the claim that NAFTA's failure has flooded the country with illegal Mexican immigrants, calamitously damaging the circumstances and prospects of the lowest-paid workers in the United States. This, too, is wrong. For one thing, by no means do all illegal immigrants from south of the border come from Mexico, which has its own problems with *its* southern border. For another, although NAFTA has, to some degree, suppressed wages at the low end of the economic scale in the United States, those who trumpet such statistics often overlook the fact that individuals in the lowest category of wage earners do not tend to stay there very long. The vast majority of people who were in the lowest quintile in 1980 and are still in the workforce today have moved to a higher quintile. The United States remains a land of economic opportunity without parallel in human history.

BUT NAFTA's alleged failures are only one source of the protectionist mood now rising in the Democratic party. A second is a shift in thinking among liberal economists, whose writings once provided the strongest intellectual bulwark for a politics of free trade.

In 2004, Paul Samuelson, a Nobel laureate, called into question one aspect of David Ricardo's idea of comparative advantage, a fundamental doctrine of classical economics. Ricardo (1772-1823) had assumed that very low-wage labor in distant countries like China and India would not threaten the wages of English manufacturing workers because of the very high transportation costs of his day. But, according to Samuelson, this is no longer true. Wages lost in developed countries today are not always compensated for by lower prices for goods at Wal-Mart. Not everyone, in other words, is a winner from globalized free trade, at least not in the short term.

Paul Krugman, another distinguished economist when he is not being a rabidly partisan Democrat, recently pointed out that the United States now imports more manufactured goods from third-world countries than from fully developed ones. This, Krugman wrote, may be a "very good thing . . . for the world economy as a whole and especially for poorer nations." But for American workers "the story is much less positive." In fact, Krugman contended,

> [I]t's hard to avoid the conclusion that growing U.S. trade with third-world countries reduces the real wages of many and perhaps most workers in this country. And that reality makes the politics of trade very difficult.

Although Krugman was at pains to stipulate that "I'm not a protectionist," he concluded that "those who are worried about trade have a point, and deserve some respect."

Like Samuelson, Krugman recognizes that, in the long run, free trade will help everyone. To this it may be added that the long run is not as long as it once was. The economic historian Gregory Clark notes that an agriculture-dominated economy requires that the vast majority of a population be poor and remain so. But today, for the first time in history, fewer than half the world's workers are farmers, and that number will continue to fall as more and more opportunities open up in manufacturing and service in countries that have had peasant economies. As better wages begin to percolate through the economies of these underdeveloped countries, they will become ever better markets for the high-end goods and services in which the rich countries have a comparative advantage.

South Korea is a good example here. In 1960, it was one of the most underdeveloped countries on earth. A single generation later, it had achieved first-world status and now has the twelfth largest economy in the world. Nor is Korea an isolated instance: the global economy is growing strongly almost everywhere. The number of "working poor" in East Asia has been cut in half in just the last ten years, and nearly everywhere else the numbers are falling as well.

But intellectuals and historians can afford to take such medium- or long-term views. Politicians often cannot or will not, at least during election season. They are in the business of winning office, and

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their time horizon rarely exceeds two years (for the House), four years (the presidency), or six years (the Senate). This is a big problem, for the indisputable benefits of free trade can take at least a generation to be fully realized, while its short-term effects can work to the disadvantage of many. For a politician, the argument against free trade is therefore always easy to advance, and even easier to advance demagogically, especially when a well-known economist can be cited in one's corner. And as for the media, with their built-in bias toward the negative, the fact that Ford has laid off 10,000 workers will always be front-page news, whereas the fact that Google went from zero jobs to well over 10,000 in the last decade will invariably go unreported.

This is not to say that Democrats are the only susceptible politicians in town. Within the Republican field of presidential candidates, Mike Huckabee, who made a surprising charge into the top tier over the fall of 2007, transformed himself from a free-trade supporter during his years as governor of Arkansas into some kind of free-trade skeptic. His views on this matter, as on others, lack specificity, but there is no mistaking the emotional appeal he was making last April in saying that "if somebody in the presidency doesn't begin to understand that we can't have free trade if it's not fair trade, we're going to continually see people who have worked for 20 and 30 years for companies one day walk in and get the pink slip and told, 'I'm sorry but everything you spent your life working for is no longer here.'" Ron Paul, the insurgent candidate who raised more money than any other Republican in the last quarter of 2007, describes himself as a libertarian, which would ordinarily signal a deep commitment to free trade. But as a member of Congress, Paul has voted against every recent free-trade proposal.

Such views have much in common with those expressed in the protest candidacies of Patrick J. Buchanan and H. Ross Perot in 1992. (Perot, who ran as an independent, won the lion's share of his support from Republican voters.) But the protectionist tenor of those candidacies was so out of step with the mainstream of the Republican party that Bill Clinton was able to depend on the support of Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole to secure congressional passage of NAFTA. When George W. Bush levied a temporary tariff on steel in 2002, the loudest voices heard in condemnation came from inside his own camp. Similarly, today's mainstream Republican candidates for President—John McCain, Rudolph Giuliani, Mitt Romney, and Fred Thompson—are part of the party's postwar consensus in favor of free trade.

Thanks in part to the populist potency of the Huckabee and Paul candidacies, one cannot dismiss the possibility of substantial pressure on the party to follow the Democrats in pulling away from free trade. But so far, and despite waverings on the margins, it remains the fact that the Republican party, long the champion of protectionism, is now essentially the owner of the ideology of open trade, while the mainstream of the Democratic party, a party founded on that ideology and proudly identified with it for virtually its entire existence, is in the process of a stunning reversal.

True, Democrats do not flat-out oppose lower barriers to trade, or flat-out endorse explicitly protectionist measures. Instead, their views are usually couched in terms of environmental concerns and workers' rights. Congressional Democrats, for instance, will claim that they are not *against* free trade; they just insist on provisos in free-trade agreements that no sovereign nation could possibly accept.

Would a Democratic President, were he or she to be elected, be willing to walk the walk of protectionism? That is a good question, and one that cannot be answered definitively in advance. It is certain, however, that any such President would be constrained by anti-free-trade campaign rhetoric, inhibited from advancing new free-trade proposals, and under pressure from constituent groups both to tighten the terms of old agreements and to take an increasingly tough line with America's trading partners. If that should happen, the American position as an advocate of ever freer trade across national boundaries—an advocacy without which the extraordinary postwar increase in global trade would not have been possible—would be at risk of much graver and more perilous erosion.

That is why politicians who understand the overwhelming importance of free trade to our future as a nation must unceasingly make the case for its benefits, as Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton did. By the same token, because no one today has personal memories of what happened when a downturn in the American economy and the workings of politics-as-usual produced the Smoot-Hawley tariff, thereby helping to turn an ordinary recession into the Great Depression, politicians favoring free trade are under an obligation to remind us of this repeatedly and in no uncertain terms. While they are at it, they might also be mindful of the sound warning tendered by the 19th-century French economist Frédéric Bastiat: "Where goods do not cross frontiers, armies will."

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In Search of Moderate Muslims

Joshua Muravchik & Charles Szrom

EVER SINCE his first post-9/11 speech summoning the nation to a war against terrorism, President Bush has stressed that "our war is against evil, not against Islam." Indeed, his administration has branded the terrorists as "traitors to their own faith"—outlaws who are "trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself."

There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of such pronouncements. But they also reflect a strategic imperative—namely, to prevent the jihadists from attracting wide support in the Muslim world. The goal of Bush's policy is, rather, to call forth the Muslim majority *against* the acts and ideology of the terrorists. As the Middle East scholar Daniel Pipes has put it: "radical Islam is the problem and moderate Islam the solution."

This is one facet of U.S. policy on which there has been virtually no dissent. But it begs the question: what exactly is moderate Islam, and where can we find it?

The term itself is perhaps unfortunate. "Moderate" implies a lesser quantity or degree of something. A moderate leftist, for example, is not too far Left. Is a "moderate Muslim" not too Islamic? To put it this way is to concede that Islam is, properly understood, antithetical to the West, and that at issue is only the intensity of the antipathy. By implication, this is to accept that terrorism is a natural corollary of an exacting fidelity to Islamic tenets—the very premise we presumably deny.

It is true that Islam's fierce dogma of monotheism insists that the world in its entirety must come to acknowledge Allah and the teachings of his unique messenger. Passages of Islamic Scripture imply a relentless war until this goal is achieved. But, as always with Scripture, contrary inferences may be drawn from other passages. In any case, non-Muslims clearly cannot accept a Muslim doctrine of war against them and, if need be, will surely meet war with war. At the same time, it is scarcely the place of non-Muslims to tell Muslims how pious their practice ought to be or how intense their devotion to their faith. If the premise of our fight against terrorism is that Muslims must become less devout, then the prospects for success will be both poor and beyond our control.

When we speak of moderate Muslims as a counterweight to extremists, then, what we seek has nothing to do with the ardor of their religious convictions. Rather, it centers on the acceptance or rejection of pluralism. In this view, Muslims may still hope and pray for the eventual recognition by all mankind of the truth of Muhammad's message. (Christians and Jews do something similar.) But they may not take up the sword to hasten the advent of that goal or pursue disputes among or with-

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK, *a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), is working on a book about Arab and Muslim democrats.* CHARLES SZROM *is a research assistant at AEI.*

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in countries by violent means. That implies democratic methods and a spirit of tolerance.

But if this explains what we mean—or ought to mean—by moderate Muslims, where can we find them, and how can we tell the real thing?

Kamran Bokhari is a one-time adherent of Islamism who broke with its ideology and is now a student of radical Islam and the director of Middle East analysis for the private intelligence firm StratFor. Bokhari has developed a useful taxonomy to distinguish among four different groups who are often all identified as moderate Muslims.

The first are ordinary citizens of Muslim countries for whom faith but not politics is central to their lives. They pray daily, fast during Ramadan, make the Haj if they can afford to, but evince little interest in public affairs. Constituting a kind of silent majority, they do not participate in violent actions, and mostly do not support them.

The second group of moderates is made up of regimes, like those in Egypt or Jordan, whose "moderation" consists in alignment with the West. A third group comprises secular liberals who are largely in sympathy with the political and cultural values of the West; well-known examples include the late Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz and the Iraqi writer Kanan Makiya.

Finally, there are various self-described Islamists who dissent from the violent ways or extreme doctrines of other Islamists. These "moderate Islamists," so it is claimed, are searching for an analog to European Christian Democracy: to wit, a political stance that is in some sense inspired or informed by religious ideals but is neither dogmatic nor exclusionary.

Bokhari's first two categories—the apolitical silent majority and the Western-allied regimes—are what they are. The former, precisely on account of their quiescence, are not likely to carry much political weight, and the latter, while valuable, not only are incapable of delivering victory in the war against terror but, through their denial of political freedoms, probably also feed terrorism. It is rather among the third and fourth groups—secular liberals and moderate Islamists—where new leverage or assets in the war against terror may perhaps be found.* And it is these two groups and, sometimes, the relationship between them that have been the focus of the greatest amount of conjecture and debate.

Secular liberals are of course the group with the greatest affinity for democracy and other Western values.† Unfortunately, the results of recent elections in Egypt, Iraq, and the Palestinian Authority seem to have proved that their views command little allegiance in the Muslim Middle East, especially when stacked up against the apparently irresistible force of Islamism. Nonetheless, in Egypt, despite pervasive vote rigging, the secularist Ayman Nour won 8 percent of the vote for the presidency against Hosni Mubarak in 2005. The same year, in Iraq, Iyad Allawi's Iraqi List won a similar percentage, and other secular parties also won some seats in parliament. These groups represent minorities, but not negligible ones.

In the Palestinian Authority, the secular Fatah lost narrowly in 2006 to Hamas and, according to polls, would almost surely win a rematch today. While secular, Fatah is historically anything but liberal; in fact, it was a pioneer of terrorism. Yet today, while hardly purged of terrorists, it counts some important liberals in its camp, notably Prime Minister Salam Fayad and Foreign Minister Riad Malki.

The example of Fatah is a reminder that, for decades, the region's dominant ideologies—Baathism, pan-Arab Nasserism, Arab socialism, Communism—were strongly secular and often anti-religious in character. In the 20th century, the Muslim Middle East embraced a variety of authoritarian secular ideologies; is it not conceivable that it might some day embrace democratic secularism as well? Although secular liberals are very much in the minority, and we cannot invest our regional interests in them alone, they are the embodiment of the values that we wish to nurture. Even as we seek other allies, it would be moral and political folly to abandon them.

This brings us to the Islamist movement, or to certain elements of it. Originating in 1928 in Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, Islamism took wing following the triumph of the 1979 Iranian revolution, which gave birth to the first "Islamic Republic." As it has spread, so has it become increasingly variegated. Some factions, starting with al Qaeda, are violent in the extreme. Others eschew violence or, after having once embraced it, have now come to renounce it.

It is among these non-violent Islamists that mod-

* There is yet another formation not included in Bokhari's typology. This comprises a variety of Islamic theologians working to construct interpretations of Muslim scripture that sustain moderation, modernity, and tolerance. In the long run, this could prove to be the most important group of all, but for the time being it has little political weight.

† "Secular" in this context is not tantamount to atheist or agnostic. Rather it signifies belief in a separation of mosque and state analogous to the practice in most of the West.

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erates—genuine or illusory—have been sighted. Virtually everywhere in the Middle East, Islamist groups are in opposition, and often they are the most powerful opposition force on the scene. As victims themselves of human-rights abuses like arbitrary arrest and torture, they often espouse democracy and human rights, and at least in the near term they may be the ones with the most to gain from free elections. That is why, in the context of America's turn to democracy promotion, they have appeared to be theoretically plausible allies.

Early advocates of such an alliance have included some (but hardly all) indigenous liberals. Anguished by their own weakness in the face of oppressive regimes, they have looked to the Islamists, with their larger and more devoted followings, as a counterweight. The thought is nothing new. In *Sugar Street* (1957), the third volume of his magnificent "Cairo Trilogy," the novelist Naguib Mahfouz portrays two activist brothers, a Communist and an Islamist, in pre-Nasser times. To the dismay of the Communist, meetings hosted by his Islamist brother draw much larger crowds; but an elder comrade in whom he confides reassures him that, ultimately, the Islamists will serve the Communists' objectives:

> Don't you see that they use our language when appealing to the mind and speaking of socialism in Islam? Even reactionaries feel obliged to borrow our vocabulary. If they pull off a revolution before we do, they will realize at least some of our objectives. They will not be able to stop time's progressive motion.

The current iteration of this tale began with the 2000 imprisonment of Saad Edin Ibrahim, the dean of Egyptian dissidents. Conducting a jailhouse dialogue with Islamist prisoners, Ibrahim came away convinced that they could be valuable allies. He wrote:

> Based on my 30 years of empirical investigation into these parties—including my observations of fellow inmates during the fourteen months I spent in an Egyptian prison—I can testify to a significant evolution on the part of political Islam. In fact, I believe we may be witnessing the emergence of Muslim parties that are truly democratic, akin to the Christian Democrats in Western Europe after World War II.

By the time of the 2006 war in Lebanon, spurred perhaps by anger over Israel's military actions, Ibrahim went further, depicting Islamists in general—not only peaceful ones—as the region's true democrats:

> The Arab people do not respect the ruling regimes, perceiving them to be autocratic, corrupt, and inept. . . . [M]ainstream Islamists with broad support, with developed civic dispositions, and with services to provide are the most likely actors in building a new Middle East. In fact, they are already doing so through the Justice and Development party (AKP) in Turkey, the similarly named PJD in Morocco, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Hamas in Palestine, and, yes, Hizballah in Lebanon.

Ibrahim's openness to Islamists was echoed somewhat more continuously by the respected Egyptian scholar Amr Hamzawy of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace:

> In today's Arab world, Islamists have assumed the role once played by national liberation movements and leftist parties. They are the mass movements of the 21st century. . . . Like all successful movements, Islamists have been able to distill a long, complex philosophical tradition into simple slogans that have quickly supplanted the pan-Arabism and socialism that dominated the region until the 1970's. As a result, in most countries Islamists represent the only viable opposition forces to existing undemocratic regimes.

Hamzawy, like others, has in mind especially the Muslim Brotherhood, the granddaddy of all Islamist groups and the one that in Egypt's 2005 parliamentary elections bested the ruling National Democratic party in most of the (carefully chosen) districts in which it entered candidates. The Brotherhood thereby demonstrated its potential to challenge the power of the incumbents. This result may have had something to do with the fact that, a year earlier, it had issued a "reform initiative" stressing "respect for partisan plurality, free elections, and the rotation of power" as well as (in the words of its spokesman) "complete equality in rights and duties" for Egypt's Christian Copts and women. To underscore its new stance, in 2004 the Brotherhood even began to replace its traditional slogan, "Islam is the answer," with a new one: "freedom is the answer." (The change attracted more notice than the Brotherhood's subsequent reversion to the original in time for the 2005 election.)

AT FIRST, the American government was unmoved by the arguments of Ibrahim and Hamzawy. Secretary of State Rice reaffirmed U.S. policy: "we're going to respect Egyptian laws. . . . We have not engaged the Muslim Brotherhood

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and . . . we won't." But others began to voice an interest in dialogue and even cooperation. According to Joshua Stacher, an Egypt specialist at Syracuse University,

> Empirical evidence demonstrates that the Brotherhood is just as committed—if not more committed—to civil nonviolence than other democracy movements that the United States has belatedly supported in places such as the Philippines, South Africa, and Indonesia. Yes, the Brotherhood is socially conservative. But the group is also politically pragmatic, believes in institutional development, and responsibly opposes authoritarian government.

A less bold but more influential statement of the same perspective appeared in *Foreign Affairs* under the title, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood." According to its authors, Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke, both of the Nixon Center, Egypt's Islamists would not only speed democratization by counterbalancing authoritarian regimes but serve other U.S. policy goals as well. While, they wrote, "critics speculate that the Brotherhood helps radicalize Muslims, in fact it appears that the Brotherhood works to dissuade Muslims from violence, instead channeling them into politics and charitable activities." Indeed, in Egypt, rather than "pursuing a divisive religious or cultural agenda," the Brotherhood "followed the path of toleration."

The *Foreign Affairs* essay grew out of a report commissioned by an arm of the American government and presented at a State Department seminar. This in itself signaled a new official interest in an opening to the Brotherhood—a group that, after all, held 88 seats in the Egyptian parliament. Last April, some Brotherhood legislators, including Mohammed Saad al-Katatni, the leader of the group's parliamentary bloc, attended a reception for a visiting U.S. congressional delegation hosted by the American ambassador, Francis J. Ricciardone. When Ricciardone came under criticism for this supposed faux pas, a "senior U.S. official" reassured *Newsweek* that "the invite to el-Katatni was 'cleared' by the State Department."

And indeed the interest of the U.S. government in talking to representatives of the Brotherhood is easy to understand. Had not Washington hobbled itself in the Iranian crisis of 1979 by having previously acquiesced in the shah's demand that we have no contact with his opposition? Nevertheless, to talk with the Brotherhood was one thing, to look to it as a force for democracy or moderation quite another.

In their essay, Leiken and Brooke make much of the Brotherhood's participation in Egyptian elections, contrasting this to the stance taken by the likes of Abu Musab al-Zarkawi, head of al Qaeda in Iraq, who threatened to treat all voters as "infidels." Jihadists, they write, "loathe the Muslim Brotherhood . . . for rejecting global jihad and embracing democracy." But how much is proved when a group that is excluded from power espouses democracy? As Abdul Rahman al-Rashed, the Saudi journalist who now heads the al-Arabiya television network, has put it, "The problem is not in giving power to Islamists—the problem is that [afterward] it will be impossible to take it out of their hands by democratic means."

In the case of the Brotherhood, one powerful reason to heed al-Rashed's warning is the fact that the organization is not itself democratic. Instead, it is headed by a "General Guide" who is elected for life by the fifteen-member General Guidance Council. Nor is the council itself elected by the rank-and-file; rather, it perpetuates itself by selecting new members to fill vacancies as they occur. The entire structure of the organization is top-down, resembling the so-called "democratic centralism" of Western Communist parties. And the membership is secret.

It may be objected that the group is officially outlawed in Egypt and therefore forced into clandestine practices. But it enjoys enough breathing room to have run an open and highly successful national-election campaign, so surely it could democratize itself if this were among its priorities. A better glimpse into the group's ethos was offered in 2005 when, splitting away from the movement, some members complained in a public statement that the Brotherhood's internal dictum was: "I listen and I obey."

As for the Brotherhood's endorsement of women's rights, the only female among the hundred-plus candidates fielded in the 2005 election signified her own views in an article she wrote for the Brotherhood website entitled, "Men are Superior to Women." And as for minorities, when an Alexandria court ruled in April 2006 that the interior ministry should allow citizens of the Baha'i faith to list their religion on identity cards, Brotherhood members of parliament responded with outrage, arguing in debate a month later that adherents of Baha'i were apostates who deserved death. Finally, contrary to the Brotherhood's protestations of democratic conviction, statements in its literature and by some leaders confirm that it aims to create a new caliphate over the Islamic world.

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If the Brotherhood is lacking in democratic credentials, what of its claim to moderation? True, the group does not engage in violence and has strongly condemned terror bombings in Egypt and some other Arab countries. On the other hand, it applauds the killing of Israelis in general and of Americans in Iraq. In an interview with an Egyptian weekly, General Guide Muhammad Mahdi Akef formulated the position as follows:

> The Muslim Brotherhood movement condemns all bombings in the independent Arab and Muslim countries. But the bombings in Palestine and Iraq are a [religious] obligation. This is because these two countries are occupied countries, and the occupier must be expelled in every way possible. Thus, the movement supports martyrdom operations in Palestine and Iraq in order to expel the Zionists and the Americans (translation by Memri).

This statement consciously makes no mention of a country called Israel. As Akef explained on another occasion, "There is nothing in our dictionary called 'Israel,'" only "Zionist gangs that occupied an Arab land after kicking out its residents." In a similar vein, Akef has called the Holocaust a "myth." The symbol of the Muslim Brotherhood is a Qur'an bracketed by crossed swords, and its pronouncements—like the chants of its demonstrators—continue to affirm the importance of jihad. Its website, moreover, features an article explicitly rejecting any attempt to define jihad "in an apologetic way that stresses only the dimension of individual self-discipline." Rather, jihad can, "of course, entail the use of force when peaceful means are not successful."

Leiken and Brooke, among others, argue that some younger Brotherhood members hold more liberal views. No doubt; but as the Brotherhood worked on a new party platform late last year, the elders seemed firmly in control. The draft program, leaked to the press, contained a number of relatively liberal formulations, but it also explicitly advocated the exclusion of women and non-Muslims from the nation's highest offices. More startling, it sought the creation of a Supreme Ulama Council as a supervisory body above Egypt's civilian government—a Sunni version of the Iranian system of theocracy.

THE EGYPTIAN BROTHERHOOD is the original Islamist group, but today there are scores, perhaps hundreds, of others. To start with, national branches of the Brotherhood exist all over the Arab world. The exact relationship among them is murky, both because of the group's secrecy and because, although organized by country, the Brotherhood does not believe in countries but in a transnational caliphate. (When challenged on his statement that he would prefer to be ruled by a Muslim foreigner than an Egyptian Christian, the General Guide reportedly responded "*toz fi Masr*," a colloquialism that translates roughly as "screw Egypt.") Nonetheless, the national branches do appear to vary considerably in the degree of their militancy.

The Syrian version, for example, is probably the most moderate, and has allied itself strongly with secular forces—liberal and otherwise—against the long-incumbent Baathist regime. Its head, Ali Sadreddin Bayanouni, has publicly criticized the Egyptian Brotherhood's draft platform, arguing that "adopting the democratic system means accepting its results. . . . We don't need, in Egypt or Syria, an article stating that the president or prime minister should not be a woman."

By contrast, the Brotherhood's Palestinian version is the Islamic Resistance Movement, or Hamas. Although some detect moderation even here (see, for example, "Hamas: The Perils of Power" by Hussein Agha and Robert Malley in the *New York Review of Books*, March 9, 2006), Hamas revealed its true attitude toward democracy in its armed putsch in Gaza and its openly expressed ambition to repeat the act in the West Bank. As for "peace," the group backs its implacable demand for the destruction of Israel with a war of terror against Israeli civilians checked only by Israel's retaliatory assassination of its leaders. Hamas's resistance to territorial compromise is embedded in its charter, which declares that

> the land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf consecrated for future Muslim generations until Judgment Day. It, or any part of it, should not be squandered: it, or any part of it, should not be given up.

Nor is Hamas willing to stop once it has thrown the Jews into the sea. Its charter adds: "the same goes for any land the Muslims have conquered by force." In other words, after Tel Aviv come Andalusia, Tours, and the suburbs of Vienna.

Still more diverse than the Brotherhood's various branches is the array of splinter groups that have broken away from it. In Egypt, for example, the Brotherhood's renunciation of violence in the 1970's—a step taken under duress—led to the formation of Islamic Jihad and Jamaat al-Islamiya.

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The former, which spawned Osama bin Laden's lieutenant Ayman al-Zawahiri, carried out the 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat. The latter staged the 1997 massacre of 58 foreign tourists at Luxor.

On the other hand, there have also been split-offs in a moderate direction. Most notable is the Hizb al Wasat (Party of the Center), which broke away in the 1990's and applied for legal recognition. When the government refused to license it, a portion of al Wasat's members returned to the Brotherhood, giving rise to suspicions that it had all along been a ploy to create a front (the Brotherhood itself not being allowed to act as a party). But for a decade since then, al Wasat's top leader, Abu Elela Madi, and those of his followers who did not return to the Brotherhood, have tried repeatedly to become licensed and in the process have forged a profile at variance with the Brotherhood's.

In the group's latest application for official recognition, women make up a quarter of the "founders," a list that also included a handful of Copts (although they later withdrew). Elela Madi himself insists that "we are against religious parties that are based on a religious basis and adopt the theocratic thinking of clergymen." He has also denounced the "idea of a caliphate" as "not supported with a single decisively clear [Islamic] text." In 2005, when one of us asked Elela Madi whether his party favored continued recognition of Israel, he replied that it had taken no position on the matter but that he himself did.

Aside from the various sections and offshoots of the Brotherhood, other Islamist groups have emerged out of the fanatical Wahhabi sect of Saudi Arabia, and from the various non-Arab reaches of the Muslim world, notably Iran, Southeast Asia, and Turkey.

Turkey's Justice and Development party (AKP) is especially noteworthy because of the strategic importance of that country and its historic role, forged by Ataturk, as a model of secularization. In addition, this party provides the rare example of an Islamist group that has held power won democratically, having polled pluralities of 34 percent in 2002 and 46 percent in 2007.

In office, it is true, the AKP has peeled back some elements of Kemalist secularism. Thus, AKP mayors have imposed restrictions on the sale of alcohol, while Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan has proposed amending the constitution to repeal its ban on the wearing of headscarves in universities. Some observers have warned of more subtle and potentially far-reaching measures of Islamization, such as seeding the judiciary with Islamist magistrates.

On the other side of the ledger, however, the AKP has improved the treatment of Kurds, enacted certain legal rights for women, and maintained Turkey's alliance with the U.S. as well as friendly ties to Israel and the pursuit of union with Europe. On balance, then, the AKP's performance to date arguably strengthens the thesis that there is little to fear from Islamists who are voted into office. Yet some caveats must be added. For one thing, the AKP had shed much of its Islamist skin *before* being elected. For another, it has governed under two powerful constraints. Externally, the EU's criteria for membership leave little room for Islamization, at least as long as Turkey continues to pursue admission. Internally, the army continues to act as guarantor of the Kemalist tradition, having previously suspended democracy four times. Although the AKP's strong electoral base may inhibit such military intervention today, the party is not free to disregard the sensitivities of the generals. Would it show a different face if free of these constraints? Who is to say?

As this incomplete survey suggests, the sheer number and variety of Islamist groups make it difficult to sort and assess them. So does the absence of any Rome or Moscow to unite them or set down a central line. Another problem is uncertainty as to whether their behavior in power would match their pronouncements in pursuit of power, or, in the case of Turkey, whether they would continue to rule as they do if the pressure on them relaxed. Still another complicating factor is that the groups have often evolved in their thinking.

One recent example: Abdel-Aziz el-Sherif, predecessor of Ayman Zawahiri as the chief of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, and the author of *Basic Principles in Making Preparations for Jihad*, a canonical text for al Qaeda and other violent jihadists, has just issued a new work from his Cairo prison cell that recants his earlier opinions and proscribes violence against civilians. Although this is literally a jail-house conversion, it bespeaks an ideology lacking heavy theoretical anchors.

On top of this, Islamist groups have a certain history of dissimulation. Bin Laden, Zawahiri, and their ilk are quite frank in their mania, but others are cagier. The Muslim Brotherhood's website sometimes says one thing in Arabic and something quite different in English. And, in common with much of the rest of the Muslim world, these groups

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play monotonous semantic games with the word "terrorism," claiming to reject it but applauding the murder of Israeli infants as "resistance."

Such habits of dissimulation extend even to the U.S. In this country there are few avowedly Islamist organizations, but several groups have abetted or fronted for the radicals The American Muslim Council (AMC), for example, defines itself as "a political movement for the civil rights and justice for all Americans," and its representatives have been feted at the White House and delivered benedictions for the House of Representatives. But the AMC evidently prefers Islamic theocracy to the American system of government. Using what is almost certainly an apocryphal quotation, one of its publications explains:

> As America today touts democracy as though it is morally engraved, it might do well to remember the astute observation of the esteemed British scholar and philosopher, George Bernard Shaw, who said about Muhammad: "I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving the problems in a way that would bring much-needed peace and happiness."

The AMC has gone so far as to include a paean to the mastermind of 9/11 on its website: "Osama bin Laden has said he seeks the liberation of the Muslim world from American dominance. He is one man, sitting silently in a cave, praying five times a day to a force unseen, believing in the power that delivered to the others the freedom of their nations."

ALL OF THE difficulties of assessment would disappear if, at bottom, all Islamists were alike. Daniel Pipes has suggested that "mak[ing] a distinction between the mainstream Islamists and the fringe ones [is] like making a distinction between mainstream Nazis and fringe Nazis. They're all Nazis, they're all the enemy."

Is this the case? Suppose that, to continue Pipes's analogy, there had been Nazis who clearly rejected violence, as some who call themselves Islamists have done. Would they not have been meaningfully distinguishable from Hitler's crew? An anathema so sweeping as Pipes's can lead to classifying individuals or groups wrongly, or overlooking important transformations in attitude.

In this connection, a dispute over an American-based group between Pipes and one of us (Muravchik) may hold implications for the broader question of how we should treat the various currents of Islamism. The dispute concerns the U.S.-based Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy (CSID), which espouses democracy and includes in its ranks both secularists and Islamists. In 2004, Carl Gershman, the president of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), spoke at a CSID conference, drawing an attack from Pipes at the time and another one last year. Defending Gershman on COMMENTARY's blog *contentions*, Muravchik pointed out that he, too, had addressed a CSID conference, thus eliciting another broadside in which Pipes accused both Gershman and Muravchik of being "amateurs" on the subject of Islam (true, but hardly dispositive).

In his response to Muravchik, Pipes quoted a statement issued by "the truly moderate Muslim intellectual leaders associated with the Center for Islamic Pluralism." Naming a few CSID figures, the statement labeled the group "a front for some of the most obnoxious members of the 'Wahhabi Lobby' in America."

Among those CSID figures named was Abdulwahab Alkebsi. An American who emigrated from Yemen over 27 years ago, Alkebsi is a practicing Muslim who calls himself a secularist and among other posts has served as the director of Middle East programs at the NED. A vocal supporter of the U.S. war in Afghanistan, he has denounced bin Laden and al Qaeda in the strongest terms and has unequivocally condemned suicide bombings in Israel. Critics in the Egyptian press recently attacked Alkebsi as an "American traitor" and one of the "American [Trojan] horses" in the Arab world.

But the centerpiece of Pipes's 2004 critique of Gershman, from which the whole dispute flowed, had been another figure in CSID. This was Kamran Bokhari, nailed by Pipes as a former spokesman for al Muhajiroun, a group so fanatic that it praised the 9/11 attacks on America. Bokhari is the same scholar whose taxonomy of Islamism we have drawn on for this article. He had indeed been an Islamist and had joined al Muhajiroun in the mid-1990's while a student at Southwest Missouri State University; but he left the group when he recognized its radicalism, years before 9/11. No longer considering himself an Islamist, but remaining a devout Muslim, Bokhari has written one of the boldest essays about Muslims and terrorism that we have seen. He did it, moreover, not for outside consumption but in the *Muslim Public Affairs Journal*, whose readers are mainly fellow Muslims. This is his message:

> The threat to Islam and Muslims does not

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> come from the United States or the West; rather, it comes from the extremists who operate freely within our midst. It is high time that Muslims end their silence about terrorism under the guise of supporting "legitimate armed freedom struggles." The attacks of September 11, 2001, should have been a wake-up call for Muslims everywhere that there is something wrong with their communities, that they have neglected to take stock of a cancer of extremism that has now grown into a beast of global proportions. . . . While the vast majority of Muslims do not support terrorism, the fact is that they also do not do anything against it. Poisoned by conspiracy theories on how the American and Israeli intelligence agencies were behind 9/11, a large number of Muslims are focusing on the "war against Islam and Muslims" and hence fail to see that radical and militants Islamists are waging a far more lethal war against Islam and Muslims.

This is exactly the message Americans have been hoping that Muslim opinion leaders would address to their religious brethren. It is also presumably what Daniel Pipes meant when he said that "moderate Islam is the solution." Yes, it comes from a former Islamist. But is that a bad thing or a good thing? Such cold-war heroes as Whittaker Chambers, Sidney Hook, Arthur Koestler, Milovan Djilas, and many others were former Communists. Few can understand the malign logic of a totalitarian ideology as well as those who have been inside it themselves—or inside cognate ideologies like the socialism of Britain's Labor Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin, who invented NATO, or of the Portuguese leader Mario Soares, who led the pivotal fight to snatch his country from the grasp of the Communists in 1974.

Is it possible that former Islamists could play a role akin to that of former Communists, or that moderate Islamists could approximately resemble anti-Communist socialists? To close our eyes to this possibility is to handicap ourselves—a handicap illustrated, as it happens, by Pipes's reliance on the Center for Islamic Pluralism as an exemplar of the "moderate Islam" he himself seeks. For this center is largely a one-man operation run by Stephen Schwartz, a former Trotskyist who converted to Islam in 1997. In speaking to Muslim audiences he adopts the middle name of Suleiman, but how many Muslims does Pipes believe are ready to look to Schwartz for leadership? If he is the answer to our search for "moderate Islam," then our prospects are dim indeed.

To be open to Islamist moderates or to Islamists-in-transition does not mean to hold back from critical scrutiny. In most Islamist groups, as our discussion of the Muslim Brotherhood makes clear, there is little moderation to be found. Nevertheless, one reason to favor talking even to some who are not moderates is that we should not miss the opportunity to probe weaknesses in their ideology. As compared with Communism, Islamism has the advantage of being genuinely rooted among Muslims in a way that Communism was never rooted among the "proletarians" for whom it claimed to speak. Communism, on the other hand, enjoyed the advantage of looking hopefully to an imaginary future, whereas Islamism, problematically, looks to an imaginary past; its ideal is to live like the Prophet and his companions. But this is a hopeless model. Not even the most extreme jihadist is prepared to trade his house for a tent, his car for a camel, his Kalashnikov and explosives for a sword and spear? Perhaps that dreary vision is why so many prefer to focus on the enticements that await them in the beyond.

In addition, there are others worthy of more sympathetic consideration. Besides the Turkish AKP and the Egyptian al Wasat, there is the new Wasatia party in the Palestinian territories. A particularly intriguing case, this last group was founded in March 2007 by Muhammad Dajani, director of the American Studies Institute at al-Quds University in Ramallah and a former Fatah member. Wasatia represents an attempt to create an alternative to both Fatah and Hamas. It calls for a two-state solution and recognizes Israel's right to exist. As for the "right of return" for Palestinian refugees, Dajani says: "Why create such a big obstacle to the peace process when it is just not practical?" Wasatia argues strongly against the violence practiced by Hamas and many of Fatah's proxies. Dajani puts it this way: "Our goal is to teach youth that suicide bombing is not Islam."

In considering these and other groups, it is even possible to set out some basic criteria by which to judge whether they are indeed parties with whom America might pursue a constructive relationship. That their politics are informed by religious values is not in itself a disqualification; nor need they be explicitly pro-American, although it would be hard to cooperate with any who are consistently anti-American. As we see it, there are six questions to be asked of any such group.

- Does it both espouse democracy and practice democracy within its own structures?
- Does it eschew violence in pursuit of its goals?

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- Does it condemn terrorism?
- Does it advocate equal rights for minorities?
- Does it advocate equal rights for women?
- Does it accept a pluralism of interpretations within Islam?

Any group that meets these six criteria seems to us to merit support and cooperation, and groups that go a long way toward meeting them deserve at least a second look. To be sure, it would be a grievous error to chase after Islamists at the expense of the secular liberals who are our most natural allies. Even if the numbers of such liberals are small, they are our natural soul mates, and we should embrace them as warmly as they wish to be embraced by us. But just as we once found friends and allies among those who had come through the Communist mill, so we may also find friends and allies, or at least people with whom we can cooperate, among moderate Islamists or those who have come through the Islamist mill. In this connection, too, we would do well to recall that some renegades from Communism (the name of Jay Lovestone comes to mind) evolved into full-fledged anti-Communists only by stages.

Communism, for a time, seemed as if it might triumph. When he defected from Moscow's service, Whittaker Chambers wrote famously that he had joined history's losing side. By contrast, radical Islamism is a fragile and perishable ideology, and, unless we surrender, there is little possibility that it will triumph. The only question is how much damage it will do before it implodes, and the answer may be a very great deal. So long as we do not fall for the first Muslim Brother who gives us a wink and a smile, anyone who can help us to forestall the worst is worth our trouble to cultivate.

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The Man on Whom Everything Was Lost

Joseph Epstein

> Stravinsky had a good deal of drink during dinner, and afterwards, in a somewhat blatant way, Arthur Schlesinger said to him, "Well, Mr. Stravinsky, how does it feel to be in the White House?" Stravinsky threw out his hands and announced, "It—feels—dronk!" [President] Kennedy said to Arthur, "Go to your kennel."
>
> —Edmund Wilson, *The Sixties*

OTHERS HAVE offered a kinder, gentler view of Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. than the one provided by Edmund Wilson in his diaries. "He was a great historian and an incomparable witness," said Paul LeClerc, president of the New York Public Library, in announcing the library's acquisition of Schlesinger's voluminous personal papers this past November. LeClerc went on to compare Schlesinger, who died a year ago at the age of eighty-nine, with Voltaire—to the latter's detriment. Voltaire, after all, may have been "the historian of France, but he didn't get in the inner circle the way Schlesinger did."

The recent publication of Schlesinger's diaries* is a useful reality check on such claims. The book also provides an account of a career in American liberalism that is, in microcosm, a partial account of the career of the liberal temperament itself over the past half-century.

JOSEPH EPSTEIN *is the author most recently of* In a Cardboard Belt! *(Houghton Mifflin), a collection of essays several of which first appeared in* COMMENTARY.

A CHARMED LIFE, Arthur Schlesinger's, or so it might seem from the middle distance. He was the son of the Harvard historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr. (1888-1965), a scholar noted for polling other historians on who were the great Presidents and for setting out a cyclical view in which conservative and liberal waves altered in American politics. Arthur, Jr., who was born in 1917, was the very model of the good student: in his memoir of his early years, *A Life in the Twentieth Century* (2000), he mentions getting only two B's in his four years at Harvard. His undergraduate thesis, a study of the Transcendentalist figure Orestes Brownson, was published by Little, Brown when he was twenty-one, to acclaim from Henry Steele Commager and Charles Beard.

After college and a year abroad on a Henry fellowship at Cambridge, Schlesinger returned to Harvard as a junior member of the school's elite Society of Fellows, an institution set up to combat the tendency toward the too-narrow specialization in academic life brought on by the rising popularity of the Ph.D. While a junior fellow, Schlesinger worked on *The Age of Jackson* (1945), published when he was twenty-eight. This book won a Pulitzer Prize and gained him an early seat at the high table of American historians. Offers of teaching jobs followed from Yale, Johns Hopkins, Chicago, Minnesota, and Har-

* *Journals, 1952-2000*, Penguin, 928 pp., $40.00. Edited by two of Schlesinger's sons, the volume represents only a sixth of Schlesinger's full journal manuscript.

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vard. A man who always carried a well-lubricated status detector, he settled in at Harvard.

Early in his faculty days, Schlesinger set to work on a multi-volume biography of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, of which over the years he completed three volumes. His plan was to emulate the method of James Parton's biography of Andrew Jackson, a work built on interviews with many of the people still alive who had served in, or opposed, Jackson's administration. The ultimate Partonian method would be available to Schlesinger when he came to write his books about John F. Kennedy (*A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*, 1965) and Robert F. Kennedy (*Robert Kennedy and His Times*, 1978), two men whose political ambitions he himself served faithfully.

Although he had grown up in an academic household and had mastered the moves of the serious scholar, Schlesinger never felt entirely comfortable as an academic. In his *Journals* he reports that he was a good enough teacher, but that his heart was always elsewhere. The great world beckoned, and though through most of his adult life he would enjoy the security of tenure and the status of an academic superstar, the great world is what, for better and worse, he attained.

Schlesinger had an early taste of that world in 1945-46 when, with the offer from Harvard in his pocket, he took a year off to live as a freelance. With his wife and infant twins he moved to Chevy Chase, Maryland, just outside Washington. Through connections made in the OSS and OWI during the war, he was soon invited to dinners with members of the circle around the columnist Joseph Alsop. They included Philip and Katharine Graham of the *Washington Post*, Felix Frankfurter (a friend of his parents), James Byrnes, Averell Harriman, James Forrestal, Clark Clifford, Chip Bohlen—in short, the Democratic or, really, the old New Deal establishment. At Alsop's he also met the important journalists James Reston and Walter Lippmann, and a young congressman named John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

During his freelance year, Schlesinger wrote articles for *Fortune*, which at the time also employed John Kenneth Galbraith, John Hersey, Dwight Macdonald, Theodore H. White, and other liberals and left-wing anti-Communists. ("For some goddamn reason," remarked Henry Luce, *Fortune*'s publisher, "Republicans can't write.") He also wrote for *Look*, *Life*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and the high-brow *Partisan Review*. Perhaps his most famous bit of journalism from that year was a *Fortune* article on the Supreme Court, drawing a distinction (taken from a professor at Harvard Law School named Reed Powell) between judicial restraint and judicial activism. During this year, too, he did a bit of minor speechwriting for President Harry Truman, setting a pattern for the future when he would be frequently called upon to draft or redraft speeches for major figures in the Democratic party, sometimes for two opposing candidates in the same campaign.

SCHLESINGER FIRST became actively involved in politics in connection with the 1952 presidential campaign of Adlai Stevenson. He was among a goodly number of academics excited by Stevenson, then the governor of Illinois and a man of great personal charm. Stevenson, they felt, held out the promise of raising the quality of Democratic-party politics, taking it out of the hands of ward-heelers and making it more idealistic, civilized, serious. "Madly for Adlai" was the Stevenson campaign slogan, and Schlesinger was as madly for him as anyone.

"An original personality in our public life," Schlesinger calls Stevenson in one of his early journal entries—"the start of something new." The start and, one has to add, also the finish. Attractive as he was, Stevenson seemed to specialize in disappointing; he had the quality, fatal to any serious politician, of being unable to admit, perhaps even to himself, that he wanted power. In 1960, after two defeats in presidential elections against the very popular Dwight Eisenhower, Stevenson, hoping to be nominated for a third run, dallied, dithered, awaited a draft, and finally lost the nomination that might otherwise have been his.

Arthur Schlesinger's *Journals* begin with his devotion to Adlai Stevenson. As both a historian and a political activist, Schlesinger was a man in need of heroes. He viewed Andrew Jackson as chiefly thus. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was an even larger hero to him: "I remain to this day," he would later write, "a New Dealer, unreconstructed and unrepentant." And Schlesinger preferred his heroes neat; no warts allowed. In the *Journals* he does not want to believe the substantial evidence suggesting that FDR failed to do everything he could have done to save the European Jews from Hitler. Burnished was how he liked his heroes, and in his own writing about them he applied the sheen.

No hero would compare for Schlesinger to John F. Kennedy, his infatuation with whom finally gave such meaning as it had to his life. As the *Journals* make unmistakably clear, this infatuation—adoration is a more precise word—extended to the vast

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Kennedy family. First Jack, then Bobby, ultimately the entire clan—Schlesinger seems never to have met a Kennedy he did not adore. The result, as even he seems vaguely to grasp, would be the ruin of his reputation as a serious historian. A 1993 journal entry notes that the writer Joe McGinnis had announced on television—"lightly, I assume"—that "he would like to do a biography of me to show how an eminent historian had lost his integrity in order to curry favor with the Kennedys." This indeed has become the standard view of Arthur Schlesinger, and nothing in his *Journals* disproves it.

When Schlesinger abandoned Stevenson at the 1960 Democratic convention to jump to the side of John F. Kennedy, he recounts that he "felt sick about it; and still feel guilty and sad." He also had his hesitations. "I am quite sure now that Kennedy has most of FDR's lesser qualities," he writes while attending the nominating convention. "Whether he has FDR's greater qualities is the problem for the future." But once on the Kennedy bus, Schlesinger never got off, and never again would he compare John F. Kennedy unfavorably with anyone. If JFK did not in fact come anywhere close to having "FDR's greater qualities," Schlesinger, in writing about him after his death, would award them to him with oak-leaf clusters.

John Kennedy was four months younger than Schlesinger, and two classes behind him at Harvard. (Ever the good student, Schlesinger had entered college early.) Part of the attraction felt by Schlesinger must have been that of the bookish boy for the good athlete, of the man with thick glasses and a slight lisp for the man who always got the girl, of the middle-class man for the man who goes through life without ever having to consult his wallet.

Arthur Schlesinger took the Kennedys at their own high self-valuation—which is to say, as American aristocrats. On his first visit to the family compound in Hyannisport in August 1960, he notes that what he found there reminded him of what he had found in visiting Adlai Stevenson:

> the same spacious, tranquil country house; the same upper-class ease of manners; the same sense of children and dogs about; the same humor; the frank conversation about a wide variety of subjects; the same quick transition from the serious to the frivolous. . . . I was able to talk freely with Jack most of the time. He talked about everything without constraint.

What Schlesinger did not seem to notice was that he was being given the full-court press of seduction. A past master at the art, Kennedy would turn his considerable charms on other Harvard figures: Galbraith, Daniel P. Moynihan, McGeorge Bundy. Along with Theodore Sorensen, his chief speechwriter, and Richard Goodwin, these were the men who gave us—and some of whom continue to give us—the fantasy of the brief Kennedy years as a place of mythical brilliance: Camelot, in the inflated term first applied by Theodore H. White. In an otherwise perfectly mediocre presidency, the one savvy thing John F. Kennedy did, at least for his own reputation, was to bring these Cambridge intellectuals on board. After his death, a number of them would dedicate their lives—and none more thoroughly than Schlesinger—to portraying him as a great man and his administration as a defining moment in American history.

John Kennedy clearly found Schlesinger's connections useful. More than once he would call upon him to explain his positions to such influential journalists as Lippmann and Reston. But otherwise he did not make much use of Schlesinger during the 1960 election campaign. "Jack," writes Schlesinger in his journal, "obviously did not much need the kind of thing I was good at," though he does not say what exactly that was. After the election there was brief talk of Schlesinger's being appointed National Security Adviser, a job that went instead to Bundy. Having declined an ambassadorship and then a position as Assistant Secretary of State for Cultural Affairs, he eventually signed on as Special Assistant to the President, with an office in the East Wing.

At the White House, Schlesinger proved to be an odd-jobs man: sent off with Bundy to tamp down troubles in Latin America, contributing to presidential speeches, sitting in on Oval Office meetings. But his larger assignment seems to have been the self-appointed one of attempting to keep the President on the liberal track—at which he was far from successful—and of explaining to liberals that Kennedy was not as disappointing to their hopes as he seemed, especially after he had made a number of rather conservative cabinet appointments, insisted on moving slowly on civil rights, and continued to express traditionally hawkish views on the cold war.

No evidence exists that Arthur Schlesinger had much influence on the Kennedy administration. He stopped nothing, changed nothing. In domestic policy, he was somewhat handcuffed, owing in part to a piece he had written for a symposium in *Parti-*

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san Review on the future of socialism, for which he held out hopes. In foreign policy he tried to persuade Kennedy not to resume nuclear testing, but the President "was not interested in hearing more liberal guff on this matter." His connection with the Cuban missile crisis he describes as "peripheral." He blames Dean Rusk, Kennedy's Secretary of State, for most of the administration's foreign-policy failures, and the CIA for the rest. The President, however, is never wrong, not really, not finally. After the disastrous Bay of Pigs adventure, Schlesinger notes in his *Journals*: "Beneath his total control, he saw from the moment things began to go wrong the whole proportions of the catastrophe. He is wholly honest with himself, I think,"

Arthur Schlesinger must have believed he was signing on as intellectual *consigliere* to Kennedy. If so, he can only have been disappointed. "I have the feeling," Schlesinger writes in his *Journals*, "that the President somewhat discounts my views, primarily because he regards me as a claiming agency for standardized liberalism, partly also because he considers me to be, after all, an intellectual and insufficiently practical and realistic." But when the Kennedy political saga ended that afternoon in Dallas, the failed *consigliere* straightaway took up his lifetime post as the President's most ardent panegyrist. "It will be a long time," he writes in his journal, "before this nation is as nobly led as it has been in these last three years." Before the coffin is closed, he gazes in grief upon "my beloved President, my beloved friend."

Schlesinger was persuaded to stay on at the White House for a bit by Lyndon Johnson, a man for whom he had no great regard—he felt Johnson to be a man of low taste—and would have even less once Johnson had expanded the Vietnam war. When he learned that he had been replaced as White House intellectual by Eric Goldman, a historian from Princeton, he resigned.

IN 1968, roused at last from his depression over Kennedy's death and Johnson's escalation of the war in Vietnam, Schlesinger got on the Bobby Kennedy bus. In his usual uncritical way he thought Bobby equipped with perfect political instincts, a man always acting "essentially out of conscience." He could not understand how anyone would fail to recognize Bobby's genius and purity; in the *Journals* he is startled to discover that he himself is despised by the New York intellectual crowd—Robert Lowell and Elizabeth Hardwick, Alfred Kazin, Jason and Barbara Epstein—for preferring Bobby to Eugene McCarthy. But the June 6 assassination of Bobby Kennedy in Los Angeles put an end to Schlesinger's dream of returning to the White House.

Enter, next, Ted Kennedy—to, as a screenwriter might put it, "strains of 'Bridge over Troubled Waters' playing faintly in the background." The bridge, of course, was the one at Chappaquiddick, and it put paid to any presidential aspirations entertained by the then-junior Senator from Massachusetts. The temper of the times had also changed: never again would the press be so accommodating to the foibles of politicians as it had been to John Kennedy's: ignoring his illnesses, his sexual athleticism, even his golfing. Yet Schlesinger in the *Journals* remains hopeful throughout that Ted Kennedy will make a run for it; in 1979, he writes that "I now begin to feel that Ted Kennedy may be planning to run after all" (as indeed he very briefly did), and as late as 1984 his hopes were still alive. His waiting for Teddy left Schlesinger rather in the position of the poor village idiot paid by his *shtetl* to sit at the outskirts of town awaiting the arrival of the messiah.

Schlesinger's views of presidential candidates were in general, and with one exception, entirely predictable: he was always for the candidate he judged the most liberal—a term whose definition shifted over time. The exception was Jimmy Carter, whom he and a great many other liberals could not stand. "He seems a mean little man," Schlesinger writes in his *Journals*, by which he may merely have been telegraphing his displeasure at being entirely excluded from the action. In the 1976 election, between Carter and Gerald Ford, he went for John Anderson, the Independent.

By this time, Schlesinger was motivated largely by nostalgia for the past and for "the really quite active role I had in national politics in the 1950's." He was also feeling more than a touch sorry for himself: "I have been totally out of things since RFK died, and never more so than this year [1976]. I am frank to say that I miss it." Not long afterward, having been awarded an Albert Schweitzer professorship at the City University of New York, he moved into a townhouse on East 64th Street with his second wife and their two children. Richard Nixon, who bought the house aligned with his on East 65th Street, became his very unwelcome back-fence neighbor.

SOCIALLY, Schlesinger flourished in New York, becoming a fixture at the Century Club, a friend of Lauren Bacall and Leonard Bernstein, invited to parties and dinners at the homes of Bianca Jagger, Diana Vreeland, and Brooke Astor. In his

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brightly striped shirts and large bowties, he was the very model of the social butterfly.

He never got back to his FDR biography. Instead, he contributed op-eds, appeared on *The Charlie Rose Show*, *Today*, and other programs, wrote reviews, defended the Kennedys against what he took to be the malicious lies of critical biographers, and was often called on, not so much for the truth—it had long been recognized that he hadn't a scintilla of impartiality—as for the liberal position on issues and questions of the day. The columnist David Broder described him as "James Carville in cap and gown."

Over the years, as Jimmy Carter was followed by two terms of the "trigger-happy" Ronald Reagan and one of George H.W. Bush, Schlesinger, in his alienation, moved further and further to the Left. True, he was put off by the hippie version of the New Left. He disdained the cultural influence of Andy Warhol, rightly characterized Tony Kushner's play *Angels in America* as "a pile of pretentious crap," and published a book, *The Disuniting of America*, attacking the effects of multiculturalism in education. Yet having once been a strong anti-Communist, he now turned against the anti-Communists, and scorned such old allies as Sidney Hook and Hubert Humphrey. He declined to see that the Democratic party, ever since being taken over in 1972 by the forces of McGovernism—the coalition of victimhoods—had been moving steadily leftward, bringing its most radical elements into the center of the action and altering its character permanently. Eugene McCarthy called George McGovern "the man who destroyed American liberalism." That was not the way Schlesinger viewed it.

Captured with present-tense fidelity, his *Journals* provide the sad portrait of the liberal New Dealer in his old age: a man who believes that America has become an international bully, and who cannot imagine a greater evil in the world than the figure of Richard Nixon; who assumes that business is inherently vile, capitalism utterly corrupt, and government essentially benevolent; whose political judgments are formed chiefly on the basis of taste (which is to say, on snobbery); and who, filled with a stirring sense of his own virtue, proclaims his concern for the people, for justice, and for enlightenment without feeling the least need to sacrifice on behalf of any of these things.

Not once in these pages does Schlesinger have anything good to say about business or businessmen, and his opinion of capitalism is best expressed by the term "unbridled" that usually appears before it. Into his seventies and eighties, he is convinced that nothing done by private enterprise cannot be done as well or better or more fairly by government. "I have a good feeling about Clinton," he writes: "essentially, I think, he believes in government, which Carter did not."

Like the late-model liberal that he became, Schlesinger continued to insist on his love for the people, and to be always concerned with the human face of suffering. Somewhat contradictorily, he also refers to his "disrespect for organized religion." Although he records the influence on him of the thought of Reinhold Niebuhr—a belief in original sin that does not excuse one from fighting to eliminate evil—nowhere in the *Journals* or in his memoir *A Life in the Twentieth Century* do the multiple mysteries of human existence, to which religion addresses itself, touch or interest or in the least perplex him.*

Such judgments make all the more arresting a passage in the *Journals* in which, after expressing his disappointment at Bill Clinton's embrace of the sweeping welfare-reform policy backed by the Republican party, Schlesinger writes:

> In the meantime, poor people will be hurt. Maybe some of them will become angry. The rich in this country seem to think that they can oppress the poor indefinitely, not recognizing that welfare is one price society pays for social peace.

This, for the kind of liberal Schlesinger became, is evidently what being "for" the poor had come to mean—not enabling them to help themselves and better their lot but, in the manner of the older welfare programs, keeping them in their place so as to prevent them from storming the barricades.

Arthur Schlesinger will probably go down in history as an unregenerate publicist for a line of progressive ideas that by the late 20th century would lose its hold on the imagination of many Americans. The reason for this political decline was one that he himself, as a historian pondering the career of the British left-wing political scientist Harold Laski, had once recognized: Laski's "besetting sin," Schlesinger wrote, was "the substitution of rhetoric for thought."

The *Journals* perfectly reflect this fateful substitution, along the way providing insight into how liberalism, a political doctrine that once seemed so honorable and generous, came to seem so flaccid

* As it happens, Schlesinger's grandfather was a Jew from East Prussia who, after emigrating to the town of Xenia, Ohio, married a Catholic woman; the couple split their religious difference by becoming Protestants.

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and empty. They also reflect something about their author that does not seem entirely unrelated.

Schlesinger is forever ascribing the views and actions of people he disagrees with to their presumed moral or psychological deficiencies. Lyndon Johnson escalated the war in Vietnam as a cover for "his personal cowardice." Averell Harriman went along because his weakness was "the desire to be near power." Ralph Ellison supported the war because he was frustrated by his inability to complete a second novel. Hubert Humphrey's problem with our Vietnam policy was his "lack of a sense of the concrete human dimension."

To gauge by the *Journals*, supplemented by his memoir *A Life in the Twentieth Century*, obliviousness to human character was Arthur Schlesinger's trademark. Although weighing in at 928 pages, and admittedly concentrating on politics, the *Journals* devote an infinitesimal amount of attention to self-examination. His insight into others rarely rises above the banal.

"It never occurred to me that Joe [Alsop] was homosexual," Schlesinger writes in his memoir. He seems no more perceptive about Sumner Welles, a WASP *extraordinaire* whose homosexuality also eluded him. Edmund Wilson underscores this imperceptiveness time and again in his own journal, where he writes of Schlesinger's replying to some point about men and women "with his usual naiveté," and of his "innocence about the history of sex." So pathetically naïve was he on the subject of Jacqueline Kennedy, drawn as a great lady throughout the *Journals*, that the news of her marriage to Aristotle Onassis came as a great shock to him. According to Wilson, he said that the event had "profoundly shaken his faith in his ability to judge character."

More than once Schlesinger remarks that politics is the "best of all spectator sports," and from his office in the East Wing he had one of the finest seats in the house from which to view it. Yet the *Journals* do not add much to the fund of inside White House gossip during the Kennedy years. He has nothing of interest to say of JFK's many illnesses, which the President was able to keep hidden from the public. His accounts of New Frontier partying—Teddy Kennedy jumping into swimming pools and all that—are tepid stuff. When Marilyn Monroe dies, all he has to report of their one encounter is the air "of terrible unreality about her." No talk herein about the 35th President of the United States dealings upstairs at the White House with Marlene Dietrich, Judith Exner, Angie Dickinson, and others.

Schlesinger's hero worship was such that once, when the President telephoned him in his East Wing office, he put on his suit jacket to take the call. On another occasion, he fawningly asked JFK why he thought "the Kennedys turned out so well [as a family] and the Churchills and the Roosevelts so badly." The President allowed that the credit went to his father.

Later in the *Journals*, Schlesinger notes that he regards Richard Nixon "as the greatest shit in 20th-century American politics." Reading this sentence, one cannot help thinking back to Joseph Kennedy, patriarch of America's most famously dysfunctional family and surely, given the history of his political sympathies, a prime contender for the title Schlesinger reflexively confers on Nixon. But then, in youth as in age, Arthur Schlesinger, our American Voltaire, turns out to have been a man on whom everything was lost.

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OBSERVATIONS

Why Beards?

Meir Soloveichik

BECAUSE OF a beard, a papacy was lost. That is the story of Johannes Bessarion, a 15th-century cardinal and convert from Greek Orthodoxy who strove to reunite Eastern and Western Christianity. Extraordinarily influential among the Catholic hierarchy, Bessarion was widely thought to be a likely successor to Pope Nicholas V. But at the conclave following Nicholas's death, a serious personal flaw was pointed out: retaining an Eastern Orthodox custom shunned by Rome, Bessarion still sported a full beard. As the historian Mark Zucker tells it:

> Not only did this result in Bessarion's loss of the pontifical throne, but his beard was later to cause him even greater humiliation and suffering. For a slight breach of etiquette during an embassy to Louis XI in 1471, the French king pulled him by the beard, an insult so serious and so upsetting that it is said to have brought about his death, from shame and grief, a year later.

To anyone familiar with talmudic tales, Bessarion's story cannot help bringing to mind another, much earlier episode of contested religious leadership. It seems the sage Rabban Gamliel, the *nasi* or religious head of post-Temple Jewry, was temporarily relieved of his position on account of what his colleagues considered a heavy-handed exercise of authority. The rabbis' ultimate choice of a successor was Elazar ben Azaryah, a brilliant scion of prestigious lineage. But Elazar, too, had a flaw, though the opposite of Bessarion's: being only eighteen years old, he did not yet have the full growth of facial hair expected of a Jewish religious leader. Fortunately, according to the Talmud, a miracle was wrought overnight, and Elazar awoke to find himself the owner of a long white beard. The story concludes that he was wont to say of himself: "Behold, I am akin to a man of seventy years."

The contrast between these two tales highlights the truth behind at least one popular visual stereotype of traditional Jews, and particularly of rabbis. Indeed, the Jewish penchant for beards as a cultural marker traces all the way back to the Bible. In the book of Chronicles, we read of the insult visited upon a group of David's servants who had been sent to comfort the Ammonite king Hanun on the death of his father. Suspecting the delegation of having come on a mission of espionage, Hanun

> took David's servants, and shaved them, and cut off their garments in the middle to their hips, and sent them away. Then there went certain persons, and told David how the men had been treated. And he sent to meet them: for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Stay at Jericho until your beards are grown, and then return."

Nor was this ancient Jewish horror of barefacedness a merely cultural phenomenon; it was intimately connected with a religious commandment. "Do not cut the edges of your beard," the Bible explicitly instructs, adding elsewhere: "the edges of your beard you shall not destroy." This ban was considered by the rabbis to be among the 365

MEIR SOLOVEICHIK *is associate rabbi at Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun in New York and a doctoral candidate in the philosophy of religion at Princeton. His "Of Priests, Rabbis, and Wives" appeared in the October 2007* COMMENTARY.

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prohibitions in the Torah, and breaking it as serious a sin as the consumption of pork. And so it has remained ever since.

WHY? AND, given the force of the prohibition, how is it that, as cursory inspection confirms, so many devout Jews today in fact go beardless?

The second question is the more quickly dispensed with: many traditionalist Jewish men have availed themselves of an ancient exegetical exception. In forbidding shaving, the biblical text, as we have just seen, employs two different verbs, enjoining the Israelites first not to "cut" the beard and then not to "destroy" it. In order to reconcile this seeming ambiguity, the Talmud argues that the one truly forbidden action is razoring—that is, a method that both shears the facial hair and thoroughly removes it. Alternative approaches, such as trimming (cutting but not destroying) or, at the other end of the spectrum, using a tweezers (destroying but not actually cutting), are permitted.

Basing themselves on this ruling, yeshiva students in Europe would commonly use a depilatory cream (which destroys but not by cutting) in order to burn the whiskers off the face. The cream was quite painful, and if left on too long could remove skin as well as hair. Thankfully, in 20th-century America, a new technology appeared: electric shavers. Although some halakhic authorities have opposed the use of such devices, others have permitted them on the grounds that, since they are known not to cut as close as a razor, they do not actually "destroy."

Be all that as it may, the careful reader of the Bible and the Talmud cannot but conclude that the spirit of the law, if not the letter, is quite clear: Jewish men are encouraged to have beards. Again the question is: why? To help answer it, we can turn to another ancient society—one in which beardlessness was quite common, and especially among priests and royalty.

THE PRACTICE of shaving makes its first appearance in the Bible in connection with the story of Joseph, who as a young man was sold by his brothers into slavery in Egypt, where he was subsequently imprisoned on false charges. The ruler of Egypt, learning of the young Israelite's knack for dream interpretation, orders him released from his prison cell and taken to the palace. And so, as we read in Genesis, Joseph "was shaved, and his clothes were changed, and he was brought before Pharaoh."

In Egypt, then, one might appear in public, and certainly in high or royal society, only in a barefaced state. As the historian Lisbeth Fried has written:

> In contrast to the majority of peoples in the ancient Near East, for the ancient Egyptians, at least from the time of the Old Kingdom (2686-2181 B.C.E.), the custom among men was to shave beard and mustache, and wear a false goatee on special occasions. Foreigners can be distinguished from native Egyptians in many Egyptian tomb paintings by the presence of full beards.

Why were the Egyptians so ardent on the subject of hair removal? In *The Beginning of Wisdom*, a study of the biblical book of Genesis, Leon Kass points out that *the* defining cultural feature of ancient Egypt was its obsession with achieving immortality. One sees this quite dramatically, he notes, in the practice of mummification, a ritual that the Egyptians believed would allow the corpse to traverse the underworld in a living and vital state. Kass's point is vividly illustrated in the description of the mummification procedure offered by the Greek historian Herodotus. It involved the removal of the brains and all internal organs and then "covering the corpse with natron for 70 days," washing it, and wrapping it "from head to toe in bandages of the finest linen anointed with gum." According to other sources, the procedure culminated in the pronouncement of a blessing: "You will live again, you will live for ever. Behold, *you are young again for ever*" (emphasis added).

Wherever we look, writes Kass, "we see in Egypt the rejection of [bodily] change and the denial of death." Shaving was a key element in this rejection. "No shaggy outlines or blemishes mar the perfectly smooth look. What appears to be an unveiling [of the human face] is actually also a veiling of age and disorder." With this in mind, it begins to seem no accident at all that the Hebrew Bible, which steadily sets itself against pagan practices of every kind, should have positively enjoined the opposite practice—that is, the wearing of beards—thus visibly and deliberately repudiating the false blessing of eternal youthfulness and underscoring the fact of our eventual and inevitable mortality. In biblical Hebrew, the very word for beard, *zakan*, shares a root with *zaken*, an elderly person.

Moving forward in time from the ancient world, a different but no less instructive contrast with Jewish law and custom is offered by the tradition of shaving that developed in the Catholic priesthood—the same tradition that would cost Johannes Bessarion the papacy. Here the key element was the ideal not of youthfulness but of celibacy. Indeed, as Zucker notes, it was one and the same pope, Gregory VII (1073-1085), who by decree "enforced not only celibacy among the clergy but shaving as well."

To be sure, a desire to differentiate Christians from both bearded Jews and bearded Muslims must have played a part in the development of this practice. But at least as great a part seems to have been played by the association of beards with ordinary human carnality. Explaining the religious virtue of shaving, the medieval scholar Guglielmus Durandus argued that

> cutting the hair of the beard . . . denotes that we ought to cut away the vices and sins which are a su-

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perfluous growth in us. Hence we shave our beards that we may seem purified by innocence and humility, and that we may be like the angels who remain always in the bloom of youth.

If, by contrast, the Jewish faith has always found religious value in facial hair, it is because Jews are not expected to embody angelic innocence.

THIS IS hardly to say that Jews do not believe in immortality. Traditional Judaism has always embraced the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the ultimate resurrection of the dead. But immortality for Jews also lies elsewhere than in the eternity of one's body or of one's spirit. Rather, it lies in one's children, and in the legacy of Jewish faith passed on to those who follow.

"For I love him," God says of Abraham in Genesis, "because he will command his children and household after Me, and they will keep the ways of the Lord, performing justice and righteousness." The same moral, minus the explicitly religious precept, informs a famous talmudic tale about the sage Honi:

> One day, as he was walking on the road, he saw a man plating a carob tree. He asked him, "How long will it take this tree to bear fruit?" The man replied, "Seventy years." He asked, "Are you quite sure you will live another seventy years to eat its fruit?" The man replied, "I myself found fully grown carob trees in the world; as my forebears planted for me, so am I planting for my children."

BY FORBIDDING Jews to destroy their hair, the Bible warns them away from seeking the siren song of eternal youth. By encouraging Jews to grow beards, it reminds them that they will not be young forever, that they must prepare the ground for those who come after, just as their fathers did for them. In acknowledging their mortality, Jews are instructed to eschew aspiring to the condition of disembodied angels—for, as a midrash memorably instructs, angels cannot become parents who will instruct their children in the ways of the Lord:

> R. Yehoshua ben Levi said: When Moses ascended on high, the ministering angels spoke before the Holy One: "Sovereign of the universe! What business has one born of woman among us?" He answered them: "He has come to receive the Torah." They said to him, "That secret treasure—you desire to give it to flesh and blood?!" The Holy One said to Moses: "Return them an answer." He then spoke before them: ". . . What is written therein? . . . 'Honor your father and your mother.' Do you have fathers and mothers?" Immediately they conceded to him.

Similarly, for Judaism, it is not the young or the celibate who are most worthy to be revered, but rather those who have already raised children and, even better, been blessed with grandchildren. Discussing this aspect of Jewish identity, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik observes the curious fact that, of the three biblical patriarchs, Jacob, the last of the three, is the one commonly referred to by the midrash as "the old one," despite the fact that both his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham lived longer than he. The reason, Soloveitchik suggests, is that it was Jacob/Israel who truly created the Jewish people and embodied the principle of its continuity. This he did most strikingly when, leaping over the gulf of the generations, he gathered his son Joseph's two children to himself, declared them "mine, no less than [my sons] Reuben and Simeon," and blessed them by saying that they would be "called by the name of my forefathers Abraham and Isaac [and] grow into a great people."

Such is the authority of old age. Embroidering the same idea in a different context, the midrash goes so far as to hint that physical manifestations of age are the indispensable substance from which we weave the moral fabric of society:

> Until Abraham, there was no old age, so that one who wished to speak with Abraham might mistakenly find himself speaking to [his son] Isaac, or one who wished to speak with Isaac might mistakenly find himself speaking to Abraham. But when Abraham came, he pleaded for old age, saying, "Master of the universe, You must make a visible distinction between father and son, between a youth and an old man, *so that the old man may be honored by the youth*." God replied, "As you live, I shall begin with you." So Abraham went off, passed the night, and arose in the morning. When he arose, he saw that the hair of his head and of his beard had turned white. He said, "Master of the universe, if You have given me white hair as a mark of old age, [I do not find it attractive]." "On the contrary," God replied, "'the hoary head is a crown of glory'" (Proverbs 16:31, emphasis added).

WHICH BRINGS us to today, and to American society. Ours is decidedly not an age of Abrahams, Jacobs, or of youthful Elazars proud to be regarded as men of seventy. On the contrary, it is one in which the external signs of aging are avoided at all costs, youth is worshipped, and immortality is sought not in children but in Botox. Like the ancient Egyptians, we, too, go to our embalmers to be told: "Behold, you are young again for ever."

Even for those who forgo trips to the dermatologist and plastic surgeon, our infatuation with youth remains embedded in daily habit. Yale University's Stephen Carter, the author of *Reflections of an Affirmative-Action Baby* (1991), once complained that American blacks had fought for decades for the right to be called "Mr." and "Mrs.," only to discover that such basic marks of respect had become obsolete across the board.

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Writing in a similar vein of our culture of "perpetual adolescence," Joseph Epstein observes on the basis of old newsreel films that even baseball games used to be attended by adults dressed "in a suit and a fedora or other serious adult hat." Now, "informality has been institutionalized" to the point where captains of industry dress like children. If, Epstein writes, it was once assumed that life had a beginning, a middle, and an end, and that "the middle—adulthood—was the lengthiest and most earnest part, where everything serious happened and much was at stake," today "the ideal almost everywhere is to seem young for as long as possible."

Epstein's words have helped me understand an interesting incongruity that I face again and again. According to the Talmud, a Jewish male becomes an adult at the age of thirteen, a female at twelve. And there was indeed a time, not so long ago, when the notion of a thirteen-year-old as an adult seemed perfectly sensible—when hungry mouths depended on a newly minted teenager's finding a job, learning a trade, preparing to leave the care of his parents, and, soon enough, starting a family of his own. This was hardly peculiar to Jews. "How quickly the Depression generation was required to mature!" Epstein writes. "How many stories one used to hear about older brothers going to work at eighteen or earlier, so that a younger brother might be allowed to go to college, or simply to help keep the family afloat!"

No longer. Today, thanks in large part to our increasing wealth and the luxury it provides, the idea of a twelve- or thirteen-year-old adult seems ludicrous. There is thus always a touch of the comic in the air when a rabbi, facing the grinning bar-mitzvah boy before him, refers to him as a "man." He is, after all, clearly still a child, one who has perhaps worked hard to prepare for this Sabbath day but mostly looks forward to hanging out afterward with his friends and returning to a life in which his every care and financial concern is seen to by his parents.

Like all other communities in America, Jews have reaped the benefits of an age of affluence and extended youthfulness, and Orthodox Jews, of whom I am one, are hardly an exception in this regard. The affluence is without question a great blessing, but within it there can be found a loss and even a potential curse—one that is nowhere more evident than at an Orthodox wedding. Typically such events are lavish and expensively catered affairs, and why not: Judaism stresses continuity, and a wedding is the happiest moment in a Jewish life. But inevitably there comes a moment when the groom and his extended family, followed by the bride's family and the bride herself, proceed down the aisle, and the crowd, having remained seated and chatting away as grandparents in their seventies or eighties have walked haltingly to their places, rises reverently before the young couple, beautiful and handsome, young and radiant.

While there may be a good reason for this relatively new practice, standing up for the bride and groom is not required by Jewish law; standing for the elderly, at any time, and any place, is a biblical obligation. The same chapter of Leviticus that instructs male Jews to grow a beard insists that we "rise before the aged, and glorify the face of an elder." Is it possible—or probable—that even traditional Jews, whose very appearance ought to teach them to revere the aged, have forgotten why weddings are so special to Judaism: because we plant for those who come after us, just as those who preceded us planted on our behalf?

I, TOO, AM a creature of the culture of extended youthfulness, and not just because I do not have a beard. I regularly call men twice my age by their first name (although I draw the line at men whom I do not yet know). And when I take my children to see the Mets play at Shea stadium, I certainly do not dress the way men dressed in the newsreels described by Epstein.

Nevertheless, and for the sake of my children, I hope that I will internalize the lesson embodied by the Jewish penchant for beards and reinforced by the Jewish religious system in general. I hope that I will have the strength to resist the sundry temptations of our benign American Egypt and embrace the path of Abraham, the man chosen by God to found a family that from generation to generation would communicate to the world the principles of justice and righteousness. And I hope I will also remember Joseph Epstein's admonition—that there is no quicker route to senility than through the all-consuming and utterly futile effort to stay young forever.

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OBSERVATIONS

Nixon's Fate, and Ours

Wilfred M. McClay

PRESIDENCIES come and presidencies go, but Richard Nixon we have with us always, an abiding point of reference in our national life. That a Broadway play based, improbably, on post-presidential interviews with David Frost from 30 years ago could win a Tony award in 2007, thirteen years after Nixon's death, attests to his imperishability as an icon, at least in some quarters. Even more broadly indicative are the ease and frequency with which his memory has been invoked thus far in the 2008 presidential campaign.

The mentions have been largely unfavorable, which is not surprising, even if it is conservative writers who are most often making them. "A Richard Nixon revival infects both parties' primaries," wrote George F. Will, referring in part to Mike Huckabee's mixing of "ostentatious piety" with "oblique nastiness," a blend thought to have been perfected by our 37th President. The syndicated columnist Michael Gerson has characterized the former mayor of New York City as "R. Milhous Giuliani," a leader presumably resembling Nixon in being a faux conservative, "a talented man without an ideological compass, mainly concerned with the accumulation of power."

Given the ideological slipperiness of her campaign, Hillary Clinton has made an especially fine target for Nixon comparisons. The columnist Robert Novak judged her operatives to be playing "Nixon tricks" when they hinted at scandalous information about Barack Obama which they had high-mindedly chosen "not to use." John Ellis observed that, like Nixon, Clinton was a fundamentally "unlikable" candidate with "resentments close to the surface," who could win election only by showing the world she was "as formidable as Tricky Dick." And so forth.

Such uses of Nixon's name suggest a powerful national consensus: we all know what the word "Nixonian" means. Yet that consensus is a superficial one, grounded in caricatures of his personality rather than reasoned assessments of his deeds. In fact, there is no modern American President whose reputation remains more unsettled. The definiteness implied in the universal abuse of his name is contradicted by the increasingly nuanced and even sympathetic judgments that scholars now render upon his career.

Any honest accounting of that career must still reckon with the indelible stain of Watergate and its damaging results, both for the nation and for the presidency itself. But historians and others point increasingly to his undoubted achievements in the realm of foreign policy, such as the dramatic restructuring of relations with China and the Soviet Union, and his many domestic-policy innovations—including in the areas of environmental protection, civil rights, and welfare reform—all undertaken during times of economic turbulence, international upheaval, and bitter internal political division. If somehow Watergate could be whited-out of the picture—a retooling of history that would likely involve a more favorable conclusion to the Vietnam war as well—he might even rank among the near-great American Presidents. But of course nothing of the sort is possible. Any evaluation of Nixon

WILFRED M. MCCLAY *holds the Sun Trust Chair of Excellence in the Humanities at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. His recent contributions to* COMMENTARY *include "Is Conservatism Finished?" (January 2007).*

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that fails to weigh his grievous faults is doomed to be just as inadequate as one that considers nothing else.

NIXON HIMSELF claimed that 50 years would have to pass before anything like a fair evaluation of his administration would be possible. He was probably right. The weight of public opinion, together with the mountain of books and articles written about him both during his tenure and after, slicing and analyzing his personality mercilessly, has been enormous. The venom he aroused is far from gone; there is a real desire, in some quarters, to have a Dick Nixon to kick around forever. Yet, with the passage of time, we can begin to see in his presidency not merely the confluence of a peculiar man with a peculiar moment but a moment when the presidency as an institution became subjected to stresses of a kind and on a scale not seen before, encountering problems that are still very much with us today.

This is why Conrad Black's lengthy new biography, *Richard M. Nixon: A Life in Full*,* is such a welcome addition to the vast literature on its subject. Not because of any new facts it might offer, but because of the perspective provided by the re-framing effects of subsequent events. Moreover, the book is a most enjoyable read, moving confidently through a wide swath of American political and social history and unfolding with a smoothness and felicity that belie the subtlety of its analysis.

Nuanced but assured in its judgments, and refreshingly insightful in its psychological portraiture, Black's *Nixon* seeks to give us, as its subtitle implies, a fuller measure of the man. As such, it will displease the brigades of Nixon scholars, who will likely ignore it. But the book's merit ultimately stands upon the coherence and plausibility of its account of its central subject, and in that regard Black is hard to equal.

In 1,000-plus pages, Black covers the full span of a very full life that stretched from before World War I to the first term of the Clinton presidency. High points along the way include Nixon's schooling, his work as a California attorney and Washington bureaucrat, his wartime service in the Navy, his many political campaigns, his service as Vice President and President, his descent into the "inferno" of Watergate and resignation, and his remarkable post-presidential "transfiguration" as a prolific author and globe-trotting wise man.

As he tells his story, Black firmly flicks away various misconceptions—Pat Nixon was not a "Stepford wife," the "slush fund" that gave rise to the 1952 "Checkers speech" was not improper, Nixon did not plan the infamous break-in at the Watergate, and most of the literature on Watergate itself is "self-serving claptrap"—and gradually fills in a compelling portrait of Nixon's sprawling and fascinating career. He also gives us an explanation of Nixon's inner life that is intimate and acute without being presumptuous or fanciful:

> Nixon thought that he was doomed to be traduced, double-crossed, unjustly harassed, misunderstood, underappreciated, and subjected to the trials of Job, but that by the application of his mighty will, tenacity, and diligence he would ultimately prevail. . . . He seemed ordinary, and attracted the support of tens of millions of ordinary people, but he was not ordinary. He was extremely intelligent, cunning, aloof, unknowable, and demiurgically determined, all masquerading and lurking behind a somewhat ordinary exterior and often banal or even uncouth articulation.

THERE ARE two especially notable virtues of Black's account. One is his depiction of the unrelenting hardness of Nixon's early life as the son of a struggling grocer in Whittier, California, and the way he was forced to wring his opportunities and successes out of a turnip by dint of extremely hard work. As a high-school student, he rose every day at 4 A.M. and drove to the Seventh Street market in Los Angeles, where he bought vegetables, delivered them to his father's business, washed and displayed them, and then went for a full day of school, at which he was always an outstanding student. Such dutiful burdens and responsibilities were the abiding theme of a remarkably joyless and careworn youth. Yet we also see how they fueled his immense drive and his characteristic opportunism, and how he could imagine himself as a stand-in for people without pedigree, the ones he would later call the Silent Majority.

This early experience was, in brief, the source of Nixon's populist streak. "Even when he achieved positions too exalted for general attention to the less fortunate," Black writes, "his heart and his thoughts . . . were always for those who had little, who struggled, who had been shortchanged. To some degree he identified with them." That this sensibility might lead him as easily to resentment and near-paranoia as to compassion is easy to understand; it is in fact the chief liability of all populism. Such a sensibility, at once hard and sentimental, would be reinforced again and again by the professional reversals of his later life.

Second, and somewhat paradoxically, Black shows that from very early on, Nixon had an instinct for Republican coalition-building, for splitting differences and bridging antagonisms by working both sides of the ideological street. As early as December 1945, when Lieutenant Commander Nixon, USN, was gearing up for a campaign against five-term Congressman Jerry Voorhis, he not only was taking red-meat tactical advice from the famously rough political operative

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Murray Chotiner but was in touch with Minnesota Governor Harold Stassen, a quintessential liberal Republican whom he had met in the South Pacific and through whom he sought to attract other liberals to his side. The Republicans had been bedeviled for nearly four decades by a liberal-conservative divide, beginning with the split between Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft and later continued in the split between Rockefeller liberals and Goldwater conservatives. Nixon would make a political career out of walking a political tightrope between the two sides.

It was, as Black observes, "a tightrope that he never fell off." Balancing an assertive, realistic, and strongly anti-Communist national-security policy against consistently moderate social and economic policies, Nixon was always able to put together strong, though not always winning, electoral combinations and eventually to bring his embattled party within hailing distance of majority status.

Not all of this balancing can be attributed to mere calculation, and much of it has been willfully misunderstood. The conventionally disparaging emphasis on Nixon's "Southern strategy," for example, leaves out the fact that "with no fanfare," as Black observes, he did more through his school-desegregation initiatives "to break down official racism than any President in history," excepting only Lincoln's abolition of slavery and Lyndon Johnson's extension of the franchise. This accomplishment, "like a number of Nixon's acts of selfless idealism, such as his refusal to contest seriously the 1960 presidential election," went "largely unrecognized, until historians started to unearth the facts."

This may go a little too far. In school-desegregation matters Nixon acted reluctantly, under the compulsion of Supreme Court decisions; and the absence of fanfare, and indeed the careful *appearance* of reluctance, were reflections of political necessity, not political modesty, in a man who needed to hold on to his right wing. Similarly, his unwillingness to contest the 1960 election, although surely patriotic, was no less surely conditioned by his awareness that he would forfeit his career if the effort failed and gain a prize no longer worth having if it succeeded—considerations that ought to have occurred to Al Gore in 2000.

BUT MENTION of the 2000 election suggests the possibility that, far from being an historical outlier, Richard Nixon has indeed come to embody the paradigmatic problems of the modern American presidency—precisely because he was the first man to experience them in full force.

Historians of the postwar presidency generally invoke FDR as the gold standard of leadership, and view his successors as languishing in his shadow. But chances are that, for the foreseeable future, our Presidents will have to operate within a nearly evenly divided electorate, with political debate driven by hard and vocal (and disproportionately influential) ideological minorities, soft silent majorities, weak and fractious parties, and hostile, irresponsible mass media. Even an act of war directed against the nation, we now know, will not insure a lasting rallying of all branches of government, let alone the nation.

The tasks of the Nixon presidency, and the fate it met, thus form the shadow that falls across the future of the office, for Republicans and Democrats alike. The tasks include an ability to walk tightropes as well as he did, and survive the withering fire of opposition from all sides. Of Nixon's successors, both Republican and Democratic, only Ronald Reagan did not entirely succumb to this problem. Jimmy Carter gained the Democratic nomination and the presidency in 1976 by splitting the difference in his own party, and yet the result was a foreign policy too weak and vacillating to satisfy Republicans and hawkish Democrats, and a domestic policy too conservative to satisfy liberals. George H.W. Bush, although a quintessentially Nixonian politician in many respects, alienated liberals with his campaign tactics, and never gained the confidence of economic and social conservatives with his governing policies.

Bill Clinton, a more skillful tightrope-walker than either of his immediate predecessors, set himself against liberal icons (as in the "Sister Souljah" episode) and embraced carefully selected conservative social policies—so much so that his popularity flourished at the expense of his own party until his rampant personal indiscretions forced him, as an act of sheer political survival, into the arms of the same hard Left against which he had run to begin with. As for George W. Bush, he has consistently sought to shift the ideological balance between the parties by coopting liberal positions on race, Hispanic immigration, entitlements, and the like, only to reap bitterness and distrust from conservatives and liberals alike. A similar fate would no doubt befall Hillary Clinton if she succeeded to the office.

But the difficulty of presidential tightrope-walking is but one of the challenges in which Nixon pioneered. His shadow very much extends to the way his presidency ended. At the time, his being forced from office was hailed as a great triumph of constitutional government. But its legacy has been more complicated than that. In a country with hard political divisions, in which the immense size and scope of the national government means that there is always an enormous amount at stake, the temptation has become irresistible to decide issues through litigious or extra-political means, including the politics of scandal, or, as Bill Clinton once put it, the politics of personal destruction.

To be sure, democratic politics is

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never a pristine thing, and demagoguery is hardly a new invention. And again to be sure, Nixon, like Clinton, was on more than just the receiving end of the politics of personal destruction. But one needs to look past that fact and think about the condition of the political world as we now find it.

The criminalization of policy differences and the broad stigmatization and demonization of political opponents have been an increasingly important element of our national politics since Nixon's time. Indeed, they are now permanent features of the political landscape. Every President since Nixon has had to deal with them, and to cope with the new readiness to leak even the most sensitive information on a near-routine basis, and to invoke the tools of impeachment, congressional investigations, special prosecutors, and all the rest. As the outrageous treatment of Scooter Libby indicates, there seems no end in sight to this folly. Conrad Black's *Nixon* should make us stop and wonder what we have been doing to ourselves.

THIS BRINGS us to the Nixonesque events in the life of the author himself. As all the world knows, Conrad Black is not only a writer but also a media baron, and lately a man convicted of mail fraud and obstruction of justice (by the same U.S. Attorney who prosecuted Libby) and sentenced to six and a half years in prison. Should that fact, whatever one thinks of the justice of his conviction, dictate the way one understands his book?

Yes, emphatically declared the reviewer in the (London) *Times Literary Supplement*, who found the book animated by a "highly personalized agenda" that "converts a *soi-disant* work of history into a prolonged partisan plea on behalf of a man as misunderstood, underestimated, and wronged as the author evidently considers himself to be." What is packaged as a "balanced" portrait of Nixon, the reviewer concluded, is better understood as "Conrad Black's apologia for Richard Nixon"—and, by extension, himself.

Well, readers will have to judge for themselves, but an apologia this book most certainly is not. There is enough of the sinister and disagreeable Nixon in Black's pages to satisfy all but diehard Nixon-haters. ("There is room for debate," Black nicely concludes, "whether he dishonored, or merely demeaned, the presidency.") True, Black's own experiences may have produced in him what might be called an elective affinity for his subject. Equally true is that Black's experiences are themselves hard to separate from the more general condition that has come to afflict our public life—a condition that first began to reach ominous proportions during the Nixon presidency and that is now everywhere in evidence. In that sense, he would be justified in seeing his own situation somewhat mirrored in that of his subject.

But there is also much evidence that Black sees his subject clear and distinct. It is hard to comprehend how, in the midst of his well-publicized trials, Black was able to produce a book of such high caliber. All the more impressive is that the elective affinity of author for subject never skews Black's judgment of Nixon, which is harsh in all the places where historical accuracy demands that it be, but generous and humane in places where those qualities are deserved but have been lacking in the past.

For Black, Nixon was "the champion of the average person, the decent toiler, the silent majority," the man who led "a perpetual revolt against the stylish, the facile and fashionable, the well born, all those . . . for whom things seemed to come easily." I am not aware of any biographical account of Conrad Black that would suggest this is a self-portrait. But it cuts to the heart of who Nixon was, and why so many hated him, and why so many more cannot forget him. That is a great deal for any biographer to accomplish.

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MUSIC

The Hollywood Musical Done Right

Terry Teachout

NO SOONER did the Tim Burton-Johnny Depp film of Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* go into production than it became the subject of excited talk in American theater circles. Only one movie of a Broadway musical, Rob Marshall's Oscar-winning 2002 version of *Chicago*, has performed well at the box office in recent years. Thus, the fact that a well-known director like Burton should have collaborated with a popular actor like Depp on a screen adaptation of the most critically acclaimed musical of the past half-century was bound to pique the interest of artists and audience members for whom the musical theater is still very much a living genre.

As I write these words, it is too soon to know whether *Sweeney Todd*, released throughout the U.S. in January, will find a mass audience. But no matter how well it does, it is a safe bet that few Hollywood directors will choose to follow in Burton's footsteps. As David Parkinson explains in the newly published *Rough Guide to Film Musicals*,[1] the social and cultural conditions that drove the popularity of the genre up through the late 50's ceased to exist thereafter:

> [R]ock 'n' roll, pop, disco, and hip-hop refused to fit neatly into Hollywood's conventional musical template. They also fragmented the audience and, with family trips to the cinema to see the latest musical spectacular becoming a thing of the past, the studios failed to capture a new generation of fans. As a result, the musical slipped down the film-genre hierarchy until it became a risky curio rather than a box-office staple.

Yet *Sweeney Todd* suggests that even now, the last word has still to be said about the Hollywood musical. Whether or not it succeeds commercially, and despite certain flaws, it is easily the most innovative movie of its kind to be made since Bob Fosse's 1972 *Cabaret*. It is also one in which many of the underlying problems of the genre have been not only re-thought but solved.

AS FILM musicals declined in popularity, they became, predictably enough, a subject of academic study. No one familiar with the absurdities of pop-culture "scholarship" will be surprised to learn that little of the burgeoning literature on the Hollywood musical is of interest, except as an index of the vertiginous intellectual decline of the university.[2] But there is one valuable aspect to this literature, which is that some of its wiser practitioners have turned their attention not to the sociology of the film musical but to its formal properties. How do these films work—and why do some of them work so much better than others?

Nearly all of the best film musicals of Hollywood's "golden age"—like *Top Hat* (1935), *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), and *Singin' in the Rain* (1952)—were written specifically for

TERRY TEACHOUT, COMMENTARY's *regular music critic and the drama critic of the* Wall Street Journal, *is finishing a biography of Louis Armstrong. He blogs about the arts at www.terryteachout.com.*

[1] Rough Guides/Penguin, 326 pp., $14.99 (paper).

[2] A typical example is *Hollywood Musicals: The Film Reader* (2002), an anthology containing such unintentionally self-parodying contributions as Matthew Tinkcom's "'Working Like a Homosexual': Camp Visual Codes and the Labor of Gay Subjects in the MGM Freed Unit" and Shari Roberts's "'The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat': Carmen Miranda, a Spectacle of Ethnicity."

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the screen rather than being adapted from Broadway shows. When a Hollywood studio did deign to film a pre-existing Broadway musical, as in the case of Cole Porter's *Gay Divorce* (1932, filmed in 1934 as *The Gay Divorcée*), the book was typically re-written and new songs were substituted for many of the ones in the stage production.

Why were Hollywood producers reluctant to retain the original form of such shows? The main reason is that the story lines of most successful stage musicals of the 30's and 40's were sketchy to the point of nonexistence. During this period, and for some years afterward, the best film musicals were almost always more dramatically sound than their Broadway counterparts.

This relative superiority was not a historical accident, but arose out of necessity. In a Broadway musical, fictional characters sing and dance in everyday situations. On stage, this improbable convention is readily accepted by audiences, since the performers are physically present in the theater and can thus be seen to be "real," just as an actor who steps out of the onstage action of a play to address the audience directly does not thereby compromise our sense of his reality. For this reason, stage musicals need not be firmly based on a realistic plot and can make use of non-naturalistic "presentational" techniques.

But the live-action sound film, consisting as it does of photographed movement, is essentially a realistic storytelling medium. Even a science-fiction film, which purports to show us things that do not exist in real life, must make them *appear* to exist in order to engage the viewer's attention. That is why the fictional events that take place in commercial movies are normally shown on screen in a more or less naturalistic manner.

These constraints necessarily caused golden-age film musicals to make use of conventionally naturalistic plots and, typically, to include fewer songs than did stage musicals of the same period. (*Top Hat*, for example, contains only five musical numbers.) Moreover, the songs were far more likely to be performed in settings that "explained" why the characters were performing them. Of the 39 golden-age film musicals cited as "canonical" in *The Rough Guide*, nineteen feature major characters who are professional singers or dancers, and most of the others contain one or more numbers staged in such a way as to provide some kind of explicit dramatic justification for the use of on-screen music.[3] Many of the musical numbers in *Meet Me in St. Louis*, for instance, are sung around the Smith family's living-room piano or at parties, and all of the others are integrated into the story line so as to emerge naturally from the unfolding action.

IT WAS NOT until Oscar Hammerstein II, who had previously pioneered the dramatically serious Broadway musical with *Show Boat* (1927, filmed in 1936 and 1951), began his long collaboration with Richard Rodgers on *Oklahoma!* (1943, filmed in 1955) that the "integrated" stage musical, whose songs advance the plot rather than simply being interpolated without reference to it, became commonplace. Even so, however, when Hollywood producers and directors finally began making faithful film adaptations of such popular Broadway musicals, they proved consistently unsuccessful at translating them into specifically cinematic terms.

Most of these newer films—*Guys and Dolls* (1955), *The King and I*, (1956), *South Pacific* (1958), *West Side Story* (1961), and others—were shot in wide-screen format. Although extremely popular with moviegoers, they were artistic failures: visually static, blandly cast, badly dubbed, far too long (each of the four listed above runs for well over two hours), and full of stage-specific devices that made little sense when transplanted to the screen. As Stephen Sondheim has observed of *West Side Story*:

> [Y]ou see a gang dancing down a real New York street in color-coordinated sneakers, and you just don't believe it. And then there are the songs themselves. The problem is, what do you shoot in something like "Tonight"? You get a close-up of him, a close-up of her, a medium shot of the fire escape. . . . The director has to fill out three or four minutes of what is essentially a static song, which holds your attention on the stage because that's part of the theatrical convention. Whereas for me, as a movie buff, I want the action to move forward constantly, and it doesn't.

Indeed, as moviegoers became accustomed to the grittier, ever more realistic directorial styles of American film in the 70's, even the mildly presentational conventions of the older, golden-age Hollywood musical became anathema. It was increasingly taken for granted that contemporary audiences would not accept a movie whose characters "burst into song" in otherwise naturalistic contexts.

Only one director, Bob Fosse, sought to break decisively with these conventions by making a hard-edged, sexually frank film of the 1966 stage musical *Cabaret* in which all but one of the musical numbers were performed in the diegetic setting of the Kit Kat Club. Significantly, *Cabaret* was also the only musical film of the 70's to be artistically successful. Except for *Chicago*, whose musical numbers are staged in a broadly similar way, it had no followers.

IN FILMING *Sweeney Todd*, Tim Burton grappled with a very different set of problems. None of the show's principal numbers lends it-

[3] Today's scholars refer to such music as "diegetic," meaning that it is part of the fictional world of the film (as opposed to the background score, of which the characters are unaware).

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self to diegetic staging, and the score, unlike *Cabaret* and *Chicago*, is operatic in scale as well as in subject matter. As I wrote a few years about the original show:

> Parts of it were comic, but in a manner so black as to recall Jonathan Swift at his most ferocious. Nor did Sondheim and [Hugh] Wheeler [the author of the book] spare their audiences anything in the way of horror: *Sweeney Todd* ends with a stageful of dead bodies and dazed survivors. The score . . . was "through-composed," with a minimum of spoken dialogue and a maximum of richly expansive music greater in force and intensity than anything that had previously been heard on a Broadway stage.[4]

How could such a show be turned into a film that made cinematic sense while remaining true to the spirit of its source? Burton and the screenwriter John Logan started by reshaping the score of *Sweeney Todd* in such a way as to eliminate its stage-specific aspects. In the process of trimming roughly a half-hour from the playing time, they deliberately took out all of its presentational elements. The introductory "Ballad of Sweeney Todd," in which the murderous protagonist is introduced to the audience, was dropped entirely, as were other numbers in which the chorus comments on the unfolding action. What remains are solos and duets in which the principal characters sing to one another or to themselves, never to the viewer.

At the same time, though, Burton did not seek to change *Sweeney Todd* into a dramatic film with interpolated songs. To the contrary: the dialogue is minimal, and most of it is accompanied by near-continuous orchestral underscoring so elaborate that the casual viewer might well come away recalling no spoken dialogue whatsoever. The paradoxical effect is to make the film, which contains less music than the stage version, seem even *more* operatic. No less flamboyantly operatic are the sets, which can best be described as a Gothic caricature of Victorian London, and the film's grim palette, in which the only bright color is the spurting red blood of the victims whose throats the revenge-crazed Sweeney slashes with his razor.

All of these changes were made with Sondheim's approval and, in many cases, his active participation. "This is not a film of a musical, it's a movie *based* on a musical," he told the audience at a screening of *Sweeney Todd* last December. Everyone involved in the film's creation speaks of it in similar terms. Says John Logan: "Tim [Burton] has been hyper-conscious of anything that smacks of too emotive, too presentation, too 'cute' in terms of the actors over-performing or playing to the back balcony."[5]

The result is a movie that to a considerable degree succeeds in fusing the seemingly incompatible virtues of the golden-age film musical and the postmodern stage musical. In Sondheim's own phrase, *Sweeney Todd* surges constantly forward, enveloping the viewer in an atmosphere of mounting dread. To view it is not to watch a lifelessly literal record of a stage performance but to be immersed in something not unlike a Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*. In this fully unified theatrical experience, Sondheim's score and the visual environment created by Burton are commingled in a manner envisioned by the great film composer Bernard Herrmann, who once wrote:

> Music in the films is a vital necessity, a living force. . . . It can invest a scene with terror, grandeur, gaiety, or misery. It can propel narrative swiftly forward, or slow it down. It often lifts mere dialogue into the realm of poetry. Finally, it is the communicating link between the screen and the audience, reaching out and enveloping all into one single experience.[6]

In light of this accomplishment, it is especially unfortunate that the one weak link in *Sweeney Todd* is the singing of the principal actors. Neither Johnny Depp nor Helena Bonham Carter (who plays Mrs. Lovett, the woman who bakes and sells meat pies made out of the corpses of Sweeney's victims) is a professional singer or has had any voice training. While their performances are far from incompetent—they render Sondheim's difficult vocal lines accurately and in tune—their voices are small in size and unmemorable in timbre, and Depp's nasal singing is riddled with pop-style mannerisms that have no place in a quasi-operatic score.

And yet that judgment must immediately be qualified. Might not the resonant, theater-filling style of a singer like Len Cariou, who created the role of Sweeney Todd on Broadway, or the Welsh bass-baritone Bryn Terfel, who has sung it in the opera house, sound inappropriate in the more intimate context of a film? As Richard Zanuck, the producer, has pointed out, Burton's goal was to give us the sound of "people singing in a room. The tone is the same, the emotions are the same, but it's not actors breaking into song." And since Depp is an actor of distinction who plays Sweeney with a cold, hard, shockingly intense reserve, it is not hard to forgive him for his lack of a legitimate singing voice—though one would not care to hear him attempt the role on stage.

Will the film version of *Sweeney Todd* appeal to under-thirty movie-

[4] "Sondheim's Operas" (Commentary, May 2003).

[5] Logan is quoted in Mark Salisbury's *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, a coffee-table companion volume to the film (Titan, 176 pp., $30.00). A soundtrack CD is also available (Nonesuch 368572-2).

[6] Sondheim has acknowledged the influence on *Sweeney Todd* of Herrmann's film scores, specifically the one he wrote in 1945 for John Brahm's Victorian thriller *Hangover Square*, recently issued on DVD for the first time.

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goers who have heretofore shown no interest in musicals? I have my doubts. It may *look* like a horror movie, but there is no getting around the fact that the show on which it is based is one of the deepest and most powerful works of modern musical theater. Such is not the stuff of which box-office smashes are made.

But even if *Sweeney Todd* should do only middlingly well, it will remain—by a very wide margin—the best and most artistically serious film ever to be made from a Broadway musical. That it was made a half-century after such films went out of fashion is irrelevant. A cinematic achievement of real significance, it will at the very least introduce Stephen Sondheim's greatest musical to a somewhat wider circle of listeners who are as yet unfamiliar with his challenging work.

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Books in Review

Father Abraham

Spiritual Radical:
Abraham Joshua Heschel
in America

by Edward K. Kaplan

Yale. 544 pp. $40.00

Reviewed by
David Hazony

LAST YEAR marked the centenary of the birth of Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972), one of the best-known, and controversial, figures in modern American Jewish life. A great articulator of religious spirituality, Heschel was also an ardent social activist, bringing eloquence and energy to bear on the causes of civil rights, Soviet Jewry, and opposition to the Vietnam war. Rarely has the word "prophet" been applied so freely to someone of our era.

Yet, in reading Heschel's voluminous writings, one is more often struck by their lofty reach than by their persuasiveness. "As a writer," his biographer Edward K. Kaplan writes, Heschel "excelled in passages of poetic prose interspersed with philosophical assertions and striking aphorisms." That is putting it delicately. There is something deeply unsettling about this philosopher's prose, a pretension to universal significance that at times sails beyond what seems justified either by his evident learning or by his intermittent insight.

Is this just a problem of style? In *Spiritual Radical: Abraham Joshua Heschel in America*, the second of two volumes (the first, *Abraham Joshua Heschel: Prophetic Witness*, co-authored with Samuel Dresner, was published a decade ago*), Kaplan suggests otherwise. He paints a portrait of a man driven by a will not merely to save his own religion from the stultifying rationalism that had come to dominate it but to save humanity itself from the iniquities of racism, murderousness, and greed. Yet these high aims were compromised both by a flawed philosophical approach and by personal defects too obtrusive to ignore.

BORN IN Warsaw to a long line of hasidic masters, the young Heschel received a traditional yeshiva education. But in 1925, at the age of eighteen, he moved to Vilna to pursue secular studies and to prepare for entrance to the University of Berlin. There in 1932 he completed his doctoral dissertation, eventually to be published as *The Prophets: An Introduction*.

Heschel had already embarked on a dual career as a theologian and spiritual leader when Nazism forced him to emigrate to the United States in 1940. He quickly took up a post at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, the rabbinical teaching school of Reform Judaism. He also discovered an American Jewish community beset, in his view, by ignorance, apathy, and a decisive lack of spiritual substance, its religious leaders stale and inauthentic.

Heschel's response, over a long writing career, was to re-assert the centrality of God and the spirit over what he saw as the excessive focus of American rabbis on textual study and their social-scientific approach to Jewish life. In major works bearing such titles as *Man Is Not Alone* (1951), *Man's Quest for God* (1954),

DAVID HAZONY *is a writer living in Jerusalem. From 2004 to 2007 he was editor-in-chief of the public-affairs quarterly* Azure.

* See Jon D. Levenson, "The Contradictions of A.J. Heschel," COMMENTARY, July 1998.

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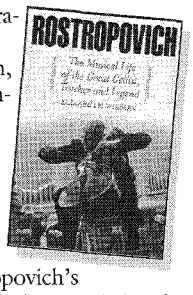
ELIZABETH WILSON
Rostropovich



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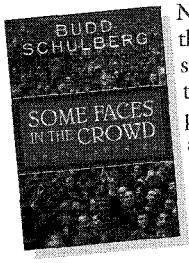

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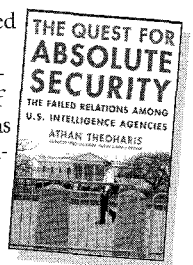

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and *God in Search of Man* (1955), Heschel argued that a direct relationship with the divine was the antidote to the ills not only of Judaism but of the West as a whole.

By elevating the false gods of science and reason, Heschel wrote in 1940, Western civilization had made its immoral bed. The results were playing themselves out in Europe, where a morally neutral science "cannot be prevented from creating poisonous gas or dive-bombers, and rationalism is powerless once 'the magnificent blond beast'. . . takes arms in order to subjugate inferior races."

Heschel's alternative was a renewed sense of "radical amazement" at the very existence of our world, an "awe" and "wonder" that would inevitably lead, as it did for the biblical prophets, to an awareness of the "realness" of God. As he put it in *God in Search of Man*:

> Unlike scientific thinking, understanding for the realness of God does not come about by way of syllogism, by a series of abstractions, by a thinking that proceeds from concept to concept, but by way of insights. The ultimate insight is the outcome of moments when we are stirred beyond words. . . . It is at the climax of such moments that we attain the certainty that life has meaning, that time is more than evanescence, that beyond all being there is someone who cares.

Nor could the discovery of God end in passive meditation or communion. For God Himself cared deeply about the human world, and sought righteous deeds. Side by side with awe and wonder, then, Heschel called for ethical behavior—for a "leap of action" that was his Jewish answer to the Kierkegaardian "leap of faith":

> A Jew is asked to . . . surpass his needs, to do more than he understands in order to understand more than he does. . . . Through the ecstasy of deeds he learns to be certain of the hereness of God. Right living is a way to right thinking.

HESCHEL'S CALL for both inward spirituality and outward activism was, at the time, a breath of fresh air. But his scholarly career in America was impeded by a series of obstacles, placed in his path, according to his biographer, by powerful and inimical figures in the Jewish academic and publishing worlds. At Hebrew Union College, he was frustrated by his students' ignorance and lack of interest. Next, having sought and won a position at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York, the training institution for the Conservative rabbinate, he learned that there, too, he would be kept at arm's length.

Heschel's long tenure at JTS was clouded, Kaplan writes, by repeated humiliations at the hands of the school's administration, in the persons particularly of Louis Finkelstein, its chancellor, and Saul Lieberman, its top talmudic authority. One suspects there is another side to the story, however, and that Heschel's difficulties had at least as much to do with his own limitations. For one thing, his writing lacked the scholarly infrastructure and careful annotation crucial for building academic stature. For another, as Kaplan concedes, he was a mediocre teacher, who consistently failed to inspire the most gifted students with whom he came into contact.

Moreover, although his writings proved significantly more popular outside the academy, they still did not win over the critics. Kaplan dismisses as an "overreaction" the biting remarks of Irving Kristol (then the book-review editor of COMMENTARY) about Heschel's magnum opus, *Man Is Not Alone*, and condemns Emil L. Fackenheim's review of that book for its alleged "misinterpretation" and "misreading." Yet this, too, is suspect. Heschel's sympathetic editor, Solomon Grayzel, wrote to him in May 1949 that "I do not know whether be-

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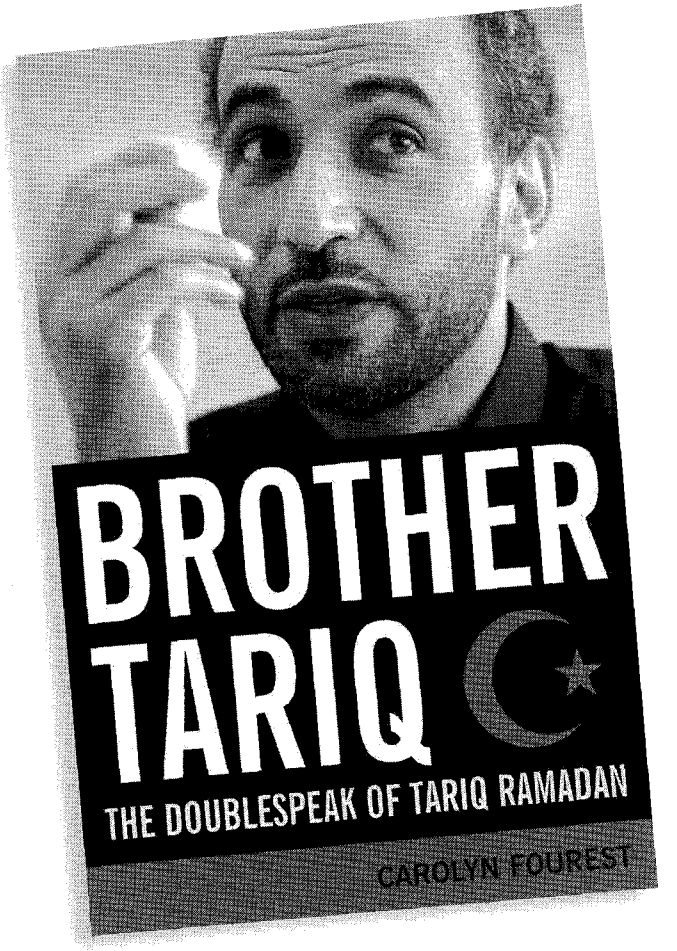
cause of my inability to comprehend the mystical approach or because of the lack of clarity in your writing, there are passages that I do not understand."

Failing to gain from teaching or writing the public acclaim he felt he deserved, Heschel turned to activism, especially by means of cooperative ventures with members of the Christian clergy. Here, Kaplan writes, he "finally found his true community" and began to emerge as a major public figure, a Jewish prophet for America.

In the early 1960's, setting himself against the instinctive preference of the Jewish establishment for maintaining a relatively low profile in American public affairs, Heschel threw himself into the civil-rights movement, speaking, writing, and demonstrating. In a famous photograph, he appears with Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. Of that event, Heschel reported: "I felt my legs were praying."

In the same years, Heschel devoted himself to raising public consciousness about the plight of Soviet Jews, which he described as "the most important emergency of our day." Protesting the Jewish community's apathy on this issue, he admonished a group of rabbis by appealing to the lesson of the Holocaust, saying that "We are [too] busy in 1963 just as we were [too] busy in 1943." Over the next decade and a half, the movement on behalf of Soviet Jews would become a major force in American Jewish life and would ultimately help bring about their freedom. Elie Wiesel, who would become the movement's most distinguished voice, cited Heschel's impact as decisive.

In other areas of his activist career, however, Heschel's personal flaws become more evident, to the point where even Kaplan can no longer defend him. At Vatican II, where he served as a representative



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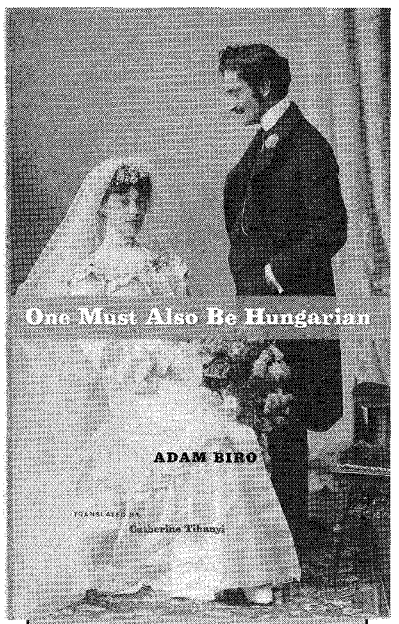

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Adam Biro

Translated by Catherine Tihanyi

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of the American Jewish Committee, he had a secret audience with Pope Paul VI in which his behavior was described by one witness as "obsequious," "tactless," and "ludicrous." Afterward, in a newspaper interview, Heschel gave himself lavish credit for influencing the Pope. In this interview, Kaplan writes, he "openly, and naively, displayed his vanity" and "narcissism," belittling other Jewish interlocutors as "mere social workers and politicians" and nearly derailing the Church's reconsideration of its historic attitude toward the Jews. When the council ended happily in 1965 with a papal declaration absolving the Jews of the charge of deicide and opening the door to a new era of Catholic-Jewish relations, the outcome was despite and not because of Heschel's involvement.

IT MAY BE unfair to extrapolate from a single fiasco to an entire career. But in reading *Spiritual Radical*, one cannot help being struck by certain continuities both of character and of mind.

"Throughout his life," Kaplan writes, "Heschel struggled with a sense of inferiority, even as he craved respect and even adulation from others." What is certain is that he wanted desperately to be seen as a prophet among men, and would go to extraordinary lengths to create the desired effect. This is evident in the bizarre physical transformation he underwent between the mid-1940's and late 1950's.

Over the course of that fifteen-year period, as is attested in photographs reproduced in *Spiritual Radical*, Heschel abandoned the appearance of a clean-shaven, dark-haired, German-looking scholar and remade himself into an East European-style guru, with prolific white hair and an unruly beard. Kaplan relates a 1996 exchange with the radical Presbyterian minister William Sloane Coffin, Jr., who addressed Heschel as "Father Abraham"—"because you are patriarchal and ecumenical, and because I am sure the original Abraham, father of us all, looked just like you." Heschel responded, with a smile: "You are very quick."

Not solely the result of character, Heschel's miscues also seem, to some degree, to flow from his philosophical ideas. A desire for simplicity led him to an impatience with the unwieldy variety of human life and a programmatic insistence on cosmic and human oneness—a not uncommon failing in religious thinkers of a mystical bent. The good, Heschel wrote in *Man Is Not Alone*, "is convergence, togetherness, union. . . . Evil is division, contest, lack of unity."

As it happens, this simplistic formulation goes against the thrust of the Hebrew Bible and the rabbinic tradition, both of which affirm the distinctiveness of nations and individuals to a degree greater, probably, than in any other major religious system. The Israelites are set aside as a "holy nation" that is commanded to follow its own distinctive path. The patriarchs, kings, and prophets are each of a different sort, and even when they speak in God's name, their words are tinged with the unique flavor of their individualized experience. As for the rabbis, they had a keen appreciation of what Jonathan Sacks has called "the dignity of difference"—itself a reflection, for them, of God's majesty.

Heschel's disdain for diversity became all the more problematic when linked to his view of human action. Emphasizing the purity of thought and "the ecstasy of deeds" as the greatest expression of religious life, he consistently underplayed their often refractory real-life results. "Every act of man," he writes in *God in Search of Man*, "hinges and rests on the intention and hidden sentiments of the heart."

These views are difficult to reconcile with effective worldly action, which presumes an appreciation of both the multifariousness of the human heart and the often gritty con-

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sequences of policy. It is thus not surprising that Heschel wound up advancing naïve or even harmful public positions, frequently echoing the most worn clichés of the universalist Left.

One example concerns his inveterate suspicion of well-earned wealth, a suspicion ungrounded in Jewish sources. Once, in a classroom discussion about whether a disused synagogue in New York City should be sold to a church or to a bank, he said: "If it is sold to a bank then it will become a temple of capitalism; if sold to a church, it will continue to be a temple of God." Thus did Heschel dismiss the one institution that had probably done more than any other to preserve Jewish economic life through centuries of persecution and deprivation—in favor of an institution whose record with regard to his people was, to say the least, more complicated.

A similar problem plagued his views on military affairs, where he voiced an aversion to conflict uncharacteristic of the biblical prophets about whom he wrote. The aversion even colored his feelings about the state of Israel, whose need to bear arms he regarded, rather peculiarly, as a continuation of the mindset of *galut*, or Jewish exile—a practice that "crie[d] out tragically that redemption has not come." Never mind the fact that in pre-exilic ancient Israel, Jews regularly bore arms, or that without the force of arms the modern Jewish state would never have come into being or stayed alive.

Heschel's strident opposition to America's intervention in Vietnam appears, at least in Kaplan's account, to have been of a piece with his facile revulsion toward war and his solidarity with the favored causes of religious and secular "progressives." Like many other activists, Heschel reductively saw the worldwide conflict between the U.S. and the USSR not as a multifaceted struggle that had to be conducted wisely but as a moral catastrophe and a looming apocalypse. Regarding the Johnson administration's decision to expand the war in Vietnam, he wrote in 1966 that "it is weird to wake up one morning and find that we have been placed in an insane asylum while asleep at night." On the issue of nuclear weapons, his rhetoric was no less extreme. "Is it not true," he wrote, "that God and nuclear stockpiles cannot dwell together in one world?"

In adopting the slate of fashionable opinions of his time, Heschel missed an opportunity to articulate an original and truly Jewish take on worldly affairs—the job, one might think, of an actual prophet of Judaism. Instead, we are left with the stereotypical impression of a populist figure who assumes the answers to difficult questions are self-evident and that what is needed is only to articulate them with passion and express moral outrage at any who do not agree. Little wonder, then, that Heschel's most fervent acolytes today, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, are to be found among the gestural proponents of the "politics of meaning" and their universalist fellow-travelers.

This is a great pity. Despite his manifold flaws, brought out in such relief in *Spiritual Radical*, it is Heschel who, more than any other 20th-century thinker in America, attempted to restore God to the center of Judaism and of Jewish consciousness. In that basic sense, he really did give a kind of expression to the voice of the biblical prophets. What he proceeded to make of that voice was often distorting and unsatisfying. But his religious instinct was a laudable one, and the task at which he failed still cries out to be fulfilled.

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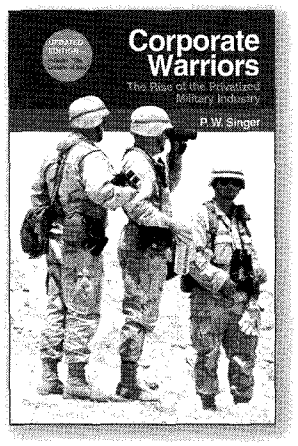

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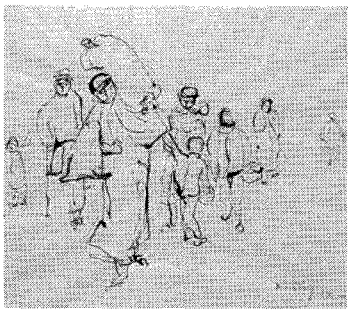

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Frame-Up

Until Proven Innocent: Political Correctness and the Shameful Injustices of the Duke Lacrosse Rape Case

by Stuart Taylor and K.C. Johnson

Thomas Dunne. 432 pp. $26.95

Reviewed by
Dan Seligman

IN THE SPRING of 2006, a story about a top-tier college lacrosse team and its direct involvement in the alleged gang rape of a young black woman became a national sensation. The crime, supposedly, occurred in the midst of a raucous Saturday-night party in a house just across the street from the campus of Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. The house was home to four members of the Duke lacrosse team. On the night in question, most of the team's 46 players, all but one of whom were white, were in attendance, in part to watch the woman participate in a strip tease. It was said that as many as 20 players had participated in the rape.

Reporters, columnists, and talking heads spun grand theories about the sociological meaning of the Duke incident. It was universally portrayed as sending a message about class (the psychopathic arrogance bred by privilege and affluence), sex (the enduring legacy of sexual violence in the American South), and race (the continuing oppression of African-Americans by the white power elite). This analysis seemed to be confirmed when three of the students were indicted on rape charges by the district attorney of Durham County.

Yet, well before the indictments were handed down, it was clear that no crimes had been committed. The three young men had airtight alibis. The district attorney who was pressing the charges knew there was DNA evidence exculpating all the lacrosse players under suspicion. The stripper who claimed to have been raped was mentally ill, had a criminal record, kept changing her story, and never coherently identified any of the alleged rapists.

How, then, did the accusations gain so much traction? And why did it take more than a year for the case to collapse and for the three young men to have their names cleared? In *Until Proven Innocent*, Stuart Taylor and K.C. Johnson seek to answer these questions. Taylor is a distinguished journalist whose reporting has focused on legal issues. Johnson is a professor of history at Brooklyn College who became consumed with the case and channeled his outrage about what he saw as a grotesque miscarriage of justice into a masterful investigative blog called "Durham in Wonderland."

TAYLOR AND JOHNSON introduce the reader to three interlocking sources of error. First was the district attorney, Mike Nifong; second, the administration of Duke; and third, the press.

Nifong, who in early 2006 was finishing his first term in office and running for a second, had especially perverse incentives to distort the facts. The case emerged in the weeks before the Democratic primary, in which Nifong was locked in a three-man race. One of his rivals, seemingly a sure winner of the white vote, had been hugely successful in raising money from the business and education communities. The other was a black man who had never prosecuted a case but enjoyed the backing of the influential Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People and appeared poised to garner a majority of the black vote.

And so Nifong seemed a certain loser. But then came the Duke lacrosse party. *The Raleigh News & Observer* (Raleigh is Durham's larger and more affluent twin city) ran a

DAN SELIGMAN *is a contributing editor of* Forbes.

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long, wildly inaccurate, and impossible-to-ignore article depicting a gang rape accompanied by racial slurs. Within two weeks the story had gained national prominence, featured on front pages and aired nightly on the TV news. Both CBS and ABC reported the judgment of a police officer that "a brutal rape . . . occurred within that house." The lacrosse team, it was repeatedly asserted, had compiled a long record of bad behavior. "Team's Troubles Shock Few at Duke" was the *New York Times* headline.

On this particular matter, Taylor and Johnson demonstrate persuasively that the personal conduct of team members fell well within the normal range for Duke's student community. But the lurid charges electrified Durham's black community, and Nifong guessed that the case had suddenly put the black vote back in play. He hit upon a winning formula, one that would require him to become an ardent advocate of the stripper's accusations and to make sure that every voter knew where he stood.

In late March, declaring that he would personally take charge of the case—because it "talks about what this community stands for"—Nifong unleashed a media blitz. Over the span of a single week, he gave at least 70 media interviews and press conferences. It worked: on primary day, he polled landslide victories in Durham's black precincts and did equally well in the few precincts dominated by the far-Left People's Alliance. And he won the Democratic nomination for district attorney.

But Nifong was not the only party in Durham to decide that presuming the guilt of the lacrosse players was a smart move. Duke University, which might have been expected to support its accused students or at the very least to reserve judgment, instead aligned itself from the beginning with the prosecution. Ten days after the party, President Richard Brodhead issued a ringing statement that began: "Physical coercion and sexual assault are unacceptable in any setting and have no place at Duke." His words were endlessly and gleefully quoted by the players' adversaries.

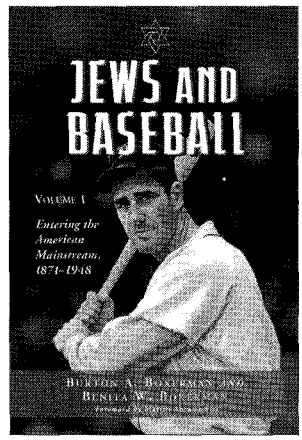
In determining how to position itself, the Duke administration appears to have had some perverse incentives of its own. According to Taylor and Johnson, the "town-gown" relationship in Durham is unusually tricky. The city is poor and 44-percent black, and Duke is by far the largest local employer, with about 15,000 residents in its labor force. Any work stoppage in black Durham could shut down the university, and anything resembling a race riot could scare away student applicants for years.

Duke's president was responding to internal pressures as well. In a chapter titled "Academic McCarthyism," we learn that since the mid-1990's, Duke has been making a major effort to bring its 500-member arts-and-sciences faculty into conformity with the latest thinking on racial and ethnic diversity and to shed the image of the university as a bastion of "wealth, whiteness, and privilege." This effort has been successful. Today's Duke is, instead, a bastion of radical politics and political correctness.

Thus, over several months in which abundant reasons presented themselves to suspect the district attorney of railroading the lacrosse players, not a single member of the arts-and-sciences faculty spoke up in support of their rights. When, finally, a lone chemistry professor publicly cautioned against a rush to judgment, he was instantly pilloried as a racist in the *Chronicle*, the Duke student newspaper.

Unlike the district attorney and the Duke administration, the mainstream American media had no obvious motive to distort reality when the rape charges surfaced. And yet the media did, in effect, vote almost

McFarland



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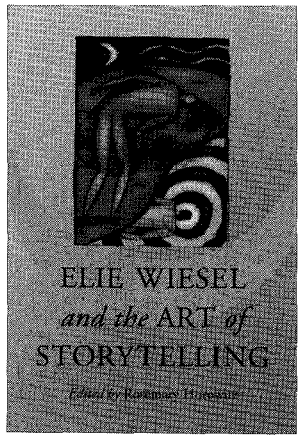

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unanimously for a guilty verdict, if for no other reason than that the power of a racially charged accusation seemed to demand it.

One seeming problem for reporters personally committed to the "guilty" scenario was the inability of the prosecution to come up with witnesses. There had, after all, been upward of 40 lacrosse players in the house that night. One has to assume that at least a few of them would have been so horrified by the alleged rape as to feel obliged to step forward and corroborate the accusations. But nothing of the sort happened. Every one of the lacrosse players kept doggedly insisting that there had been no rape.

One might also think that so striking a consensus would have caused at least a few reporters to wonder whether the players might be telling the truth. Again, nothing of the sort happened. News stories explained the absence of corroborating witnesses in psychological terms, leaning hard on the proposition that intercollegiate sports produces a very special bond with one's teammates, precluding any appearance of disloyalty.

This, for example, was the theme of a long article in *Time* entitled "Fraternity of Silence," and of a *New York Times* story called "When Peer Pressure, Not a Conscience, Is Your Guide." Exploring the "locker-room culture" that supposedly prevents players from listening to their conscience, the *Times* reporter, Selena Roberts, went on to characterize the Duke team as "a group of privileged players of fine pedigree entangled in a night that threatens to belie their social standing as human beings."

A YEAR LATER, it is Mike Nifong who has lost his "fine pedigree," having been forced to resign his office in disgrace and being disbarred for professional misconduct. As for Nifong's cynical attempt to frame three innocent men in order to save his political hide, it similarly calls into question his own "social standing" as a "human being."

But what of the other actors—the administration of Duke University and the media that swallowed Nifong's story whole? They have suffered a little embarrassment, but nothing else—certainly not enough to provide a cautionary example to other university administrators and talking heads the next time there is a racially charged incident of dubious provenance. *Until Proven Innocent*, a reportorial tour de force, may be the only thing of lasting value to emerge from this dreadful spectacle.

Power to the People

Democracy's Good Name: The Rise and Risks of the World's Most Popular Form of Government

by Michael Mandelbaum

Public Affairs. 316 pp. $27.95

Reviewed by
Arch Puddington

IS DEMOCRACY in decline? Some observers seem to think so. For evidence, they point to the failure of the United States to bring stability to Iraq, the way reformers have been crushed by the ayatollahs running Iran, the increasingly sophisticated techniques used by Communist China to retain political control, the ascension to power, via elections, of the Islamist terrorist movement Hamas in the Palestinian territories and the radical left-wing leader Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, and the return of assertive authoritarianism in Russia. All this is happening, moreover, at precisely the moment when the expansion of freedom has been embraced by President Bush as a basic value of American foreign policy.

To Michael Mandelbaum, who teaches international relations at Johns Hopkins and has written on subjects ranging from U.S. foreign policy to baseball, such gloom betrays a serious misreading of democracy's history and current status. As he argues in his new book, the extraordinary growth that political freedom has enjoyed over the past quarter-century is a much more important story than is its failure to emerge in the relatively small number of remaining autocracies. In *Democracy's Good Name* he surveys the history of democratic government from the French Revolution forward, analyzes the circumstances that have given rise to and sustained it in disparate locations around the globe, and attempts to explain its resurgence at the close of a century that also gave rise to some of the most durable dictatorial regimes in human history.

MANDELBAUM concedes at the outset that "[e]verything we know about history [has] argued against the triumph of democracy." For centuries, it was believed even by enemies of tyranny that democracy was a dangerous alternative, one that would inevitably lead to another form of tyranny—namely, of the majority. And yet, in the face of this and other obstacles, the model set by a small collection of liberal democracies proved powerfully influential—and never more so than in the latter part of the 20th century when it became impossible to ignore or deny their unique ability to provide both freedom and prosperity to their citizens. Via the example set by America, Great Britain, and a handful of other countries, democracy "became the world's most successful brand."

Of course there were setbacks along the way. As recently as the mid-1970's, Mandelbaum notes, democracy was under duress if not in outright decline. An emboldened

ARCH PUDDINGTON *is director of research at Freedom House.*

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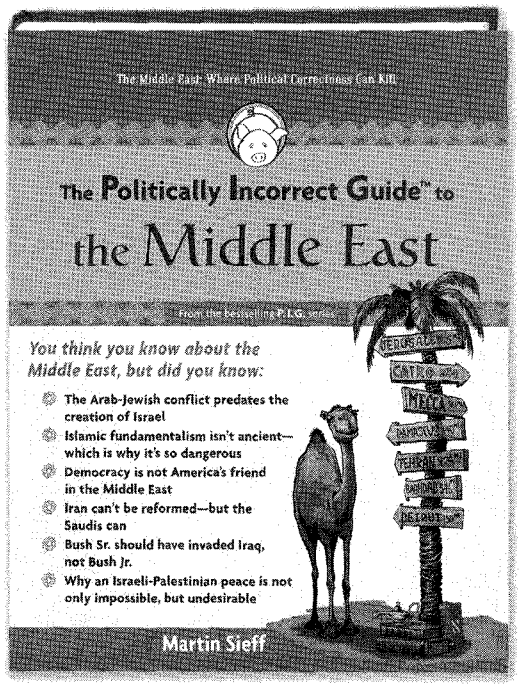
Communism was scoring seemingly momentous gains in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, while juntas and strongmen held sway throughout the third world. Not only did democracy's reach extend little beyond its West European and North American nucleus, but the democratic idea itself had fallen out of fashion. Many experts in the United States, and an even greater number in Europe, were maintaining that it was, in fact, an inappropriate form of government for the immature societies of the developing world.

But even as these pessimistic scenarios were being drawn, there had begun what has been called democracy's Third Wave, a remarkable process that spread from southern Europe to Latin America, Asia, and, finally, the Communist world. Today, Mandelbaum records, some 120 countries, nearly two-thirds of the world's total, are classified as democracies.

How did this turnabout occur? Mandelbaum writes extensively here about the central roles played by elections and civil liberties in maintaining young democracies once they have been established. But, for him, the principal engine of democratic expansion in recent decades has been the free market. The unfettered exchange of goods and services produces wealth, strengthens the middle class, limits corruption, and instills habits of trust and compromise in societies where envy and a winner-take-all mentality have long prevailed. Mandelbaum goes so far as to predict that market economics may eventually lead to democratic transformations in the world's two most geopolitically important autocracies: China and Russia.

Not that the rise of democracy happens automatically, even given the presence of markets. Conscious agency plays a central role, as we see in the sacrifices made by dissidents and democratic activists in so many repressive societies. And the actions of outside powers can be crucial.

From the Morning Papers to the Nightly News, the Middle East is More Than a Headline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In the latter respect, Mandelbaum singles out the postwar role played by Washington in the political transformation of the two defeated powers of Germany and Japan. Both of them, by virtue of their stunning recoveries from wartime devastation, succeeded in building a framework of democracy not only at home but, no less importantly, in their larger geographic spheres. Similarly, Mandelbaum credits cold-war America with guaranteeing the physical security of existing democracies against the menace of the Soviet Union, and with using its diplomatic muscle to facilitate peaceful transitions from authoritarianism to democracy in places like South Korea and the Philippines.

This, he recognizes, was never a morally or politically simple matter: acting on the principle that the enemy of my enemy is my friend, the U.S. had often found itself aligned with undemocratic regimes. But, in Mandelbaum's judgment, the practice of realpolitik never prevented us from promoting our core values. As credible opportunities arose to foster democracy, America consistently seized them, often at the expense of long-established alliances with friendly dictatorships.

YET EVEN as Mandelbaum praises the thrust of American diplomatic and military policy in the first decades of the cold war, he is dismissive of later programs designed specifically to promote democracy, especially during the presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. True, he gives Reagan a high grade for establishing the National Endowment for Democracy, but in general, Mandelbaum contends, Reagan had a "limited" impact on the spread of freedom, and his administration's policies were hardly the crucial factor "in determining when and where democracy took root."

As for Bush, Mandelbaum suggests that he has actually set back the cause through the military occupation of Iraq and by mistakenly designating the Arab Middle East as the focus of his democracy-promotion agenda. When it comes to the Middle East, indeed, Mandelbaum is deeply pessimistic about the prospects for fundamental political change, seeing Arab and Muslim societies as too beset by religious and ethnic divisions, by their history of autocracy, and by the spread of political Islam, an ideology now explicitly and effectively competing with democracy for the allegiance of Muslim publics.

ON THE whole, *Democracy's Good Name* brings clarity to its subject. While Mandelbaum is hardly the first to draw the connection between free markets and broader freedoms, his forthright defense of this point is especially welcome at a

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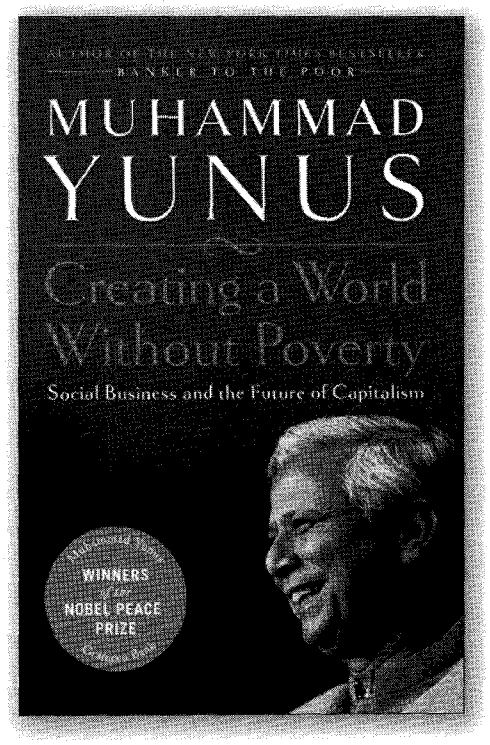

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time when many on both the Right and the Left have begun to treat global trade as freedom's enemy. But for all the light he sheds on the remarkable growth of democracy in the latter part of the 20th century. Mandelbaum (who served as an adviser to Bill Clinton during his first presidential campaign) falters badly in dealing with the presidencies of Reagan and George W. Bush.

By Mandelbaum's own chronological reckoning, the Third Wave of democratic transformation coincided with the tenure of Ronald Reagan (and has been extended under Bush). It is true that market forces played a major role in helping to bring this about, but only an out-and-out economic determinist would deny that, in places like the Philippines, Nicaragua, and the Baltic states, and more recently and haltingly the Middle East, democratic advances were secured thanks in varying degrees to the policies of these two Presidents.

In addition, Mandelbaum accuses both administrations, but especially the Bush administration, of heavy-handedness and an unseemly impatience—the "cowboy" charge—warning that the prospects for promoting democracy "quickly and easily" are "poor." But this is a straw man, and "quickly and easily" loads the dice. There is no evidence that advocates of democracy promotion believe in an immediate or low-cost payoff. As the decades-long experience of the cold war teaches, and as Bush himself has repeatedly emphasized, breakthroughs require patience and resilience—especially in places like the Arab Middle East and other hold-out parts of the world.

Finally, even as Mandelbaum expresses an all but immovable pessimism with regard to the Arab world—a stance that sits oddly with his persuasive refutation of earlier instances of pessimism—he comes across as overly optimistic about China and Russia. In these two cases, reposing his faith in the power of markets to wreak the desired social and political transformations, he fails to come to grips with the clear determination of the respective regimes to neutralize existing and potential sources of domestic opposition.

Such inconsistencies mar what is otherwise a valuable book by a thoughtful student of international affairs.

Under Budget, Over the Top

Otto Preminger: The Man Who Would Be King

by Foster Hirsch

Knopf. 592 pp. $35.00

Reviewed by
Alec Mouhibian

His name has descended into obscurity in the two decades since his death, but Otto Preminger (1905-1986) was once a very famous man, one of the handful of film directors powerful enough to insist that his own name appear above the title of the movies he directed. At the height of his career, he was as well-known as Alfred Hitchcock. But rather than contend with Hitchcock for the title of "master of suspense," Preminger became the master of manufactured controversy, working hand in hand with a willing press to challenge the strictures of Hollywood's self-imposed censorship system. Preminger practically pioneered the use of coy outrage as a marketing ploy, as when he insisted on his characters speaking the words "virgin" and "mistress" in *The Moon Is Blue* (1953), despite a 20-year ban imposed by the Production Code and the condemnation of the League of Decency, a Catholic organization that set itself the task of policing popular culture.

Nor was Preminger's battle on behalf of "adult" filmmaking the only cause of his celebrity. An imposing man with a thick Austrian accent and a massive bald pate, Preminger played memorable onscreen villains in fare as varied as the *Batman* television series and the World War II drama *Stalag 17*. Preminger's role as a German prison-camp warden in the latter film was an inside joke of sorts between him and its director, Billy Wilder, because this putative Nazi came from a family of Polish-Jewish strivers.

His father, Markus Preminger, had been born poor in Galicia, an outpost of the Austro-Hungarian empire, but proved himself so capable and charming that he enjoyed a meteoric rise as a civil servant and was eventually offered a position as the empire's chief prosecutor. There was, however, one condition: Markus had to convert to Catholicism. When he refused ("my father simply would not renounce his Judaism," Otto's brother Ingo said), he managed to secure the post nevertheless.

The elder Preminger relocated the family to Vienna when Otto was ten, and there set his son on a path to success as a man of the theater. Otto moved to the United States in 1935; his parents followed three years later, after Hitler's invasion of Austria.

Yet there was indeed something in Preminger's personal conduct that led not a few people to liken him to the Nazi he played so convincingly in *Stalag 17*. Leon Uris, whose novel *Exodus* was the source of Preminger's endless 1960 movie of that name, could hardly have been more plain-spoken. "Otto was a terrorist," he said years later. "He's Arafat, a Nazi, Saddam Hussein."

This startling sentiment appears in Foster Hirsch's comprehensive new biography of Preminger, and clearly represented a challenge of sorts to the author. Drawn to the

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Alec Mouhibian, *a new contributor, is a writer living in Los Angeles.*

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"sheer size and scale of that personality, along with my conviction that his often elegant work has been largely misjudged or undervalued," Hirsch set out to correct the record on both. But his case for the subtlety of the work is overshadowed by his portrait of his subject's gargantuan lack of personal subtlety of any kind.

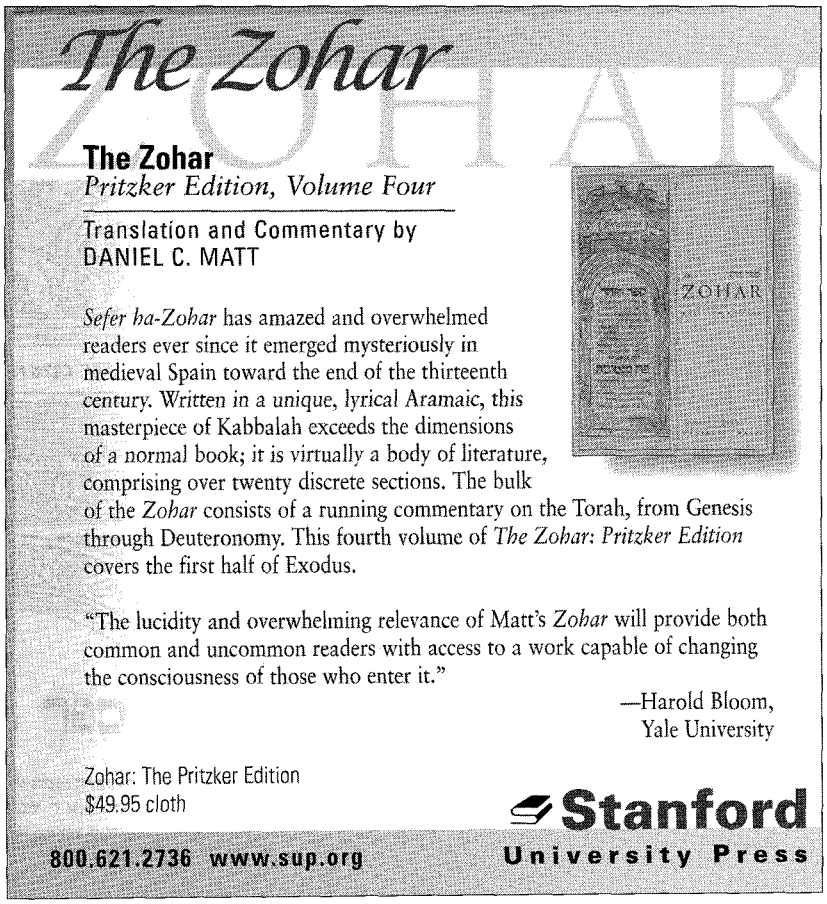
Preminger's on-set temperament might be described as sado-masochism without the masochism. "Kill the Jew!" was his memorable way of directing an actor to get rid of an ill-conceived Yiddish accent. Shooting a scene in *Angel Face* that called for Robert Mitchum to strike Jean Simmons, Preminger, Hirsch writes, "made the actor 'slap her for real' and insisted on a number of retakes before an enraged Mitchum turned to the director and smacked him." He also seemed to take particular relish in correcting his leading men on how to kiss, while engaging in torrid affairs with performers from Gypsy Rose Lee (whom he married) to Dorothy Dandridge. Although a number of Hirsch's interviewees were prepared to defend Preminger, their testimony amounts mostly to the paradox, unresolved by Hirsch, that he was cruel in public but kind in private.

Growing up with privilege and confidence in Vienna had accustomed Preminger to high style. "He knew the art of living," one friend said, and clearly preferred it to the art of art. Despite his success in the theater, he was unable to mount a successful production of a serious literary play. As a director and producer he had one skill that would stand him in unique stead for the rest of his career: he usually came in under budget. Indeed, his financial prudence and his facility with popular fare led him to the presidency of Vienna's Jofestadt theater company, which in turn led to the 1935 offer from Fox Studios to come to Hollywood. He accepted on the spot.

HE NEEDED nine years to break through. By dint of executive acumen alone, he survived a personal blacklisting by Daryl Zanuck, the head of Fox, following an unwise shouting match. Eventually, he became Zanuck's go-to guy, trusted to mop up flailing productions swiftly and cheaply. After salvaging a few duds, he was allowed to direct *Laura* in 1944. Hirsch properly characterizes this career-making classic as a "deliciously perverse" murder mystery, and it made Preminger a force to reckon with in Hollywood.

Hirsch describes Preminger as "a master of long takes . . . and of complexly composed long shots and sinuous camera movement." In fact, Preminger's films are ambiguous in a manner unusual for Hollywood then and now. They seem objective, understated, unsentimental, genuinely realist in approach. With none of the moist petulance that infuses modern crime dramas, *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959) depicts every nuance of a murder trial in small-town Michigan that ends in an apparently false verdict. And just as that movie offers a close-up analysis of the jury system, *Advise and Consent* (1962) exposes every sordid twist and turn in the U.S. Senate's handling of a contentious confirmation hearing involving the President's nominee for Secretary of State.

What makes these films tick, as Hirsch points out, is Preminger's passion for process. He celebrates American law and democracy by peeling away all false sentiment until their fascinating underlying rhythms are in clear view. The effect, Hirsch demonstrates, is surprisingly life-affirming, reminding us that Preminger, at his best, was very good indeed. If *Anatomy* is still the gold standard of courtroom dra-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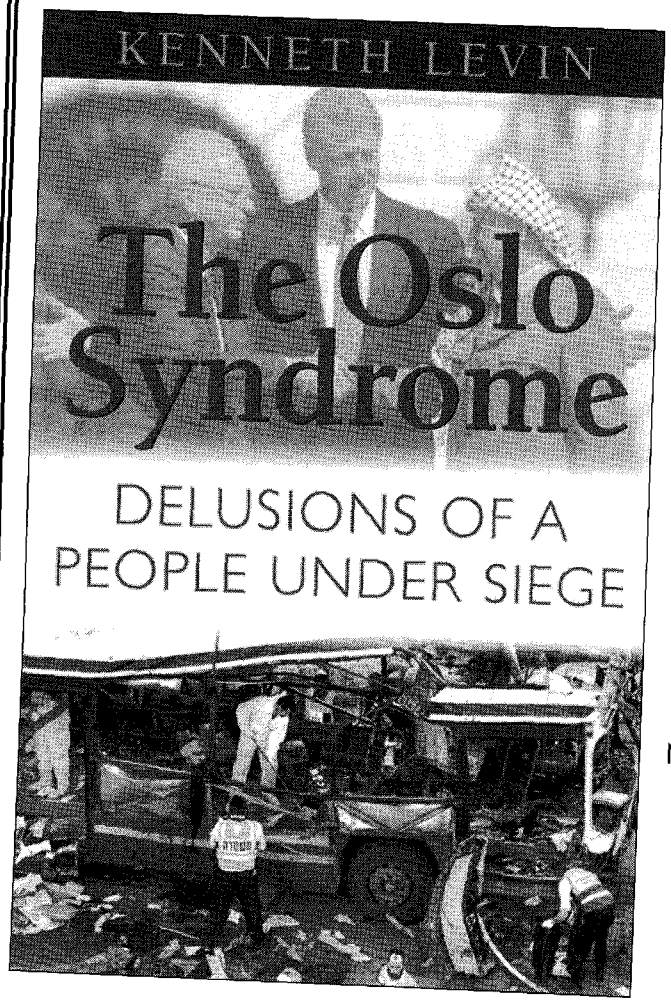

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mas, *Advise and Consent* remains the most quietly patriotic film ever made. *Laura*, *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1950), and *Bunny Lake Is Missing* (1965) are all top-notch examples of film noir. Finally, Preminger's cinematic treatment of sex retains its erotic edge, even though the battles he fought over it seem no more controversial today than a marital double bed.

ALTHOUGH Hirsch writes well about the Preminger style and the virtues of his work, he has nothing interesting to say about Preminger's politics, which he superficially describes as Democratic and liberal. This hardly seems sufficient. "Otto called himself a liberal, but a true liberal doesn't treat people the way he did," an actor named Larkin Ford is quoted as saying. "I have a feeling he would have voted for George Bush."

This may be mere thoughtless stereotyping, but still: a raving Roosevelt Democrat who could have voted for Bush? That is an interesting mix for sure, worthy of a biographer's attention, but evidently beyond Hirsch's ken. He does not seem to be aware that Preminger makes a bracing appearance in Tom Wolfe's peerless 1970 essay, "Radical Chic," about the notorious Leonard Bernstein cocktail party at which New York's beautiful people feted the Black Panthers. Practically alone among the attendees, Preminger would have none of it.

This otherwise well-researched book is full of juicy bits. But just as Hirsch cannot capture the contradictions of Preminger's ideological convictions, neither can he resolve what he rightly describes as "the apparent contradiction between the director's temperament and the cool tone of his most commanding films." That cool tone is Preminger's legacy as an artist; as Hollywood legacies go, it is an uncommonly notable one.

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Works & Days

Churchill and the Jews: A Lifelong Friendship
by Martin Gilbert
Henry Holt. 384 pp. $30.00

Churchill's Promised Land: Zionism and Statecraft
by Michael Makovsky
Yale. 368 pp. $35.00

Reviewed by
Hillel Halkin

IN THE upscale Jerusalem neighborhood known as the German Colony, several small side streets are named for Gentile supporters of Zionism and the Jewish people. Apart from the French author Emile Zola, the Czech president Tomas Masaryk, and the South African prime minister Jan Smuts, the names they bear are those of Englishmen. There is the Tory prime minister David Lloyd George, a chief architect of the Balfour Declaration; the early 20th-century British Labor-party leader Josiah Wedgewood; Colonel John Henry Patterson, commander of the Jewish Legion that fought in World War I; the pro-Zionist British general Wyndham Deedes, and so on. Missing from the list, though he more than once proudly proclaimed that "I am a Zionist," and called Jews "the most formidable and remarkable race which has ever appeared in the world," is Winston Churchill.

To the best of my knowledge, indeed, there is no street, road, place,

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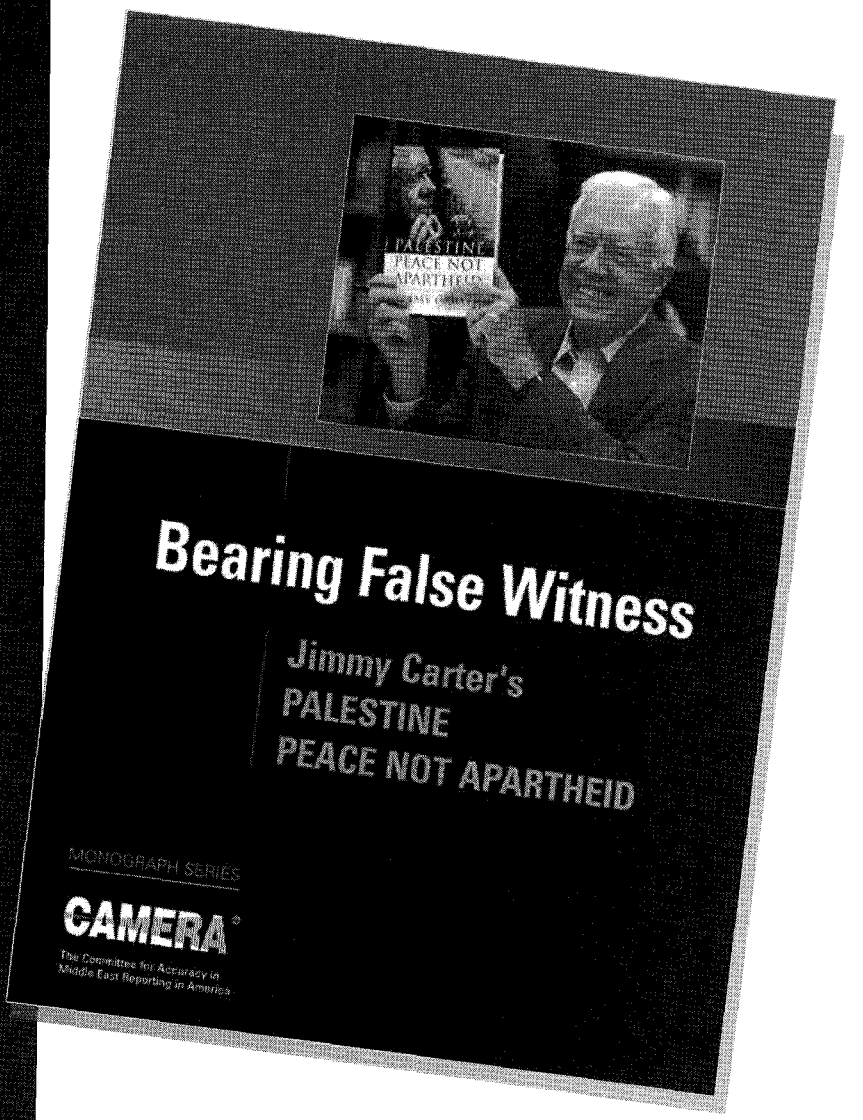

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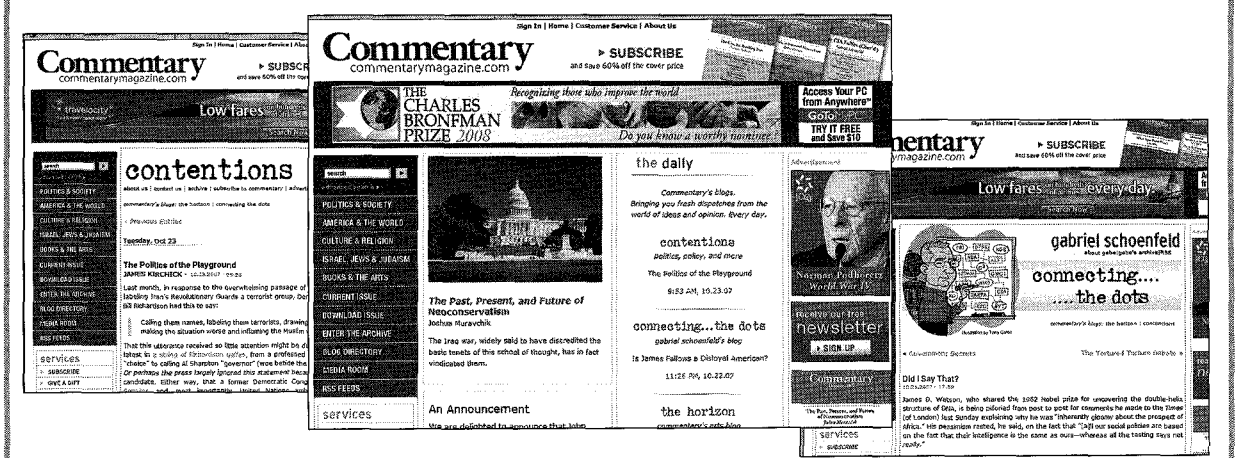
or square named for Churchill anywhere in Israel. While this reflects no animus toward him in Israeli historical consciousness, it indicates no special place of honor, either. Why this should be so, when no other ranking 20th-century politician was more outspoken in his support of Jewish causes, is an interesting question. Two new books, Martin Gilbert's *Churchill and the Jews: A Lifelong Friendship*, and David Makovsky's *Churchill's Promised Land: Zionism and Statecraft*, help provide an answer.

Gilbert and Makovsky come to their subject from opposite ends of a scholarly career. Gilbert, an extraordinarily prolific British historian, has published over 50 works on modern Jewish and European history, including a multi-volume biography of Churchill. For Makovsky, whose *Churchill's Promised Land* is an expansion of several chapters in his doctoral thesis, this book is his first. The two studies also have different and complementary emphases, Gilbert's dwelling more on Churchill's personal life and relationships, Makovsky's on Churchill the global strategist. And yet the striking thing about them is how much they agree. Their similar conclusions leave the reader reasonably convinced that, at least in regard to Jews and Zionism, the man they describe was the man Churchill was.

THIS WAS an Englishman of aristocratic background and Blimpish views whose father, Lord Randolph Churchill, was—uncharacteristically for a member of his class—socially friendly with Jews and sympathetic to them. From his father, Winston Churchill inherited a philo-Semitism that never left him. Jews were among his earliest political and financial backers, and it was because of them that he chose to run for parliament in 1904, at the age of twenty-seven, from a heavily Jewish district in Manchester. Elected to the House of Commons, he helped lead a successful fight against a proposed Aliens Bill that would have curbed Jewish emigration from Czarist Russia, and in 1910, now Home Secretary, risked political criticism by sending in troops to quell anti-Jewish riots in South Wales, the only ones of their kind in modern English history.

Between these two dates, Churchill also issued an official statement expressing "full sympathy" for the "restoration" of the Jewish people to a national "center" of its own in accordance with its "traditional aspirations." Although he did not specifically mention Palestine, preferring to stay out of the intra-Jewish debate then taking place between Zionists and "Territorialists" over the best lo-



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cation of a Jewish homeland, this was in effect the beginning of a lifelong identification with the Zionist cause.

And yet both Gilbert and Makovsky leave one with the impression that Churchill's rhetoric on Jewish and Zionist issues was almost always more forceful than his actions. As minister of munitions during World War I (in which capacity he commenced a long friendship with Chaim Weizmann, whose wartime contribution as a chemist to the British arms industry was great), he apparently played no role in the British cabinet's adoption of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, and soon after the war's end he recommended washing Great Britain's hands of newly conquered Palestine and dumping it, along with the rest of the dismembered Ottoman Empire, in the lap of the League of Nations. Even though he had just published a controversial newspaper article championing Zionism as a bulwark against Bolshevism in "the struggle for the soul of the Jewish people," his considered opinion, overruled by Lloyd George, was that administering Palestine as a British mandate committed to furthering Jewish national goals was too much trouble to be worth undertaking.

THIS DOUBLE aspect of Churchill's attitude toward Zionism was to be accentuated in the years to come. After Palestine became part of the British Empire, he assumed direct ministerial responsibility for it when appointed colonial secretary in 1921. Great Britain's Palestine policy, tugged in different directions by supporters of the Jews and the Arabs in government and military circles, was still in a formative stage. Here, one would have thought, was a golden opportunity for a sympathetic British politician to set it on a firmly pro-Zionist course.

But Churchill, despite his pro-Zionist pronouncements, some made in face-to-face encounters with Arab leaders during a trip to Palestine and the Middle East, was hesitant. On the one hand, he rejected Arab demands to repudiate the Balfour Declaration and grant home rule to the Arabs of Palestine. But he also refused to replace Palestine's meticulously "even-handed" High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, with a more pro-Zionist figure and administration; endorsed, against Zionist protests, Samuel's contention that Jewish immigration should be subject to government limitations in accordance with Palestine's "economic capacity"; concurred with Samuel again in declining, despite previous private statements to the contrary, to make the achievement of a Jewish majority in Palestine an official goal; and once again cast about for ways of relieving England of its Balfour obligations, this time by handing Palestine over to the United States.

It was a missed moment that was never to recur. After Churchill left the government in 1922 without having done anything to institutionalize Zionist aims, British policy in Palestine steadily tilted in the Arabs' favor. The result was that, in the 1930's, when the Jewish people desperately needed the country as a refuge from Hitlerism and European anti-Semitism, and could easily have become a majority if allowed to enter it, the British shut its gates in their faces, at first partially, and then all but completely. Although he was in no way part of this betrayal, which he eloquently denounced from the benches of Parliament, most dramatically at the time of the 1939 British White Paper that slashed Jewish immigration to Palestine to next to nothing, Churchill had helped set the stage for it.

On the whole, as depicted by both Gilbert and Makovsky, Churchill was a stronger supporter of Jewish and Zionist causes when out of office than when in it. This was perhaps only natural in view of the fact that a powerless politician is free of most of the responsibilities, pressures, and needs to compromise that one forced to govern must reckon with. Although Churchill really did think well of the Jews and poorly of the Arabs, whom he did not associate with the Western civilization that he fervently believed in and considered Jews to be an integral part of, the anti-Semitism of much of the Conservative party and much of the British public, and an empire with tens of millions of Arab and Muslim inhabitants, were realities he had to deal with both as colonial secretary and during World War II, when he unexpectedly became England's prime minister after long years in the political wilderness.

THE WORLD WAR II years were ones in which Churchill's genuine anguish over the Nazis' annihilation of the Jews of Europe, which he called "the greatest and most horrible crime ever committed in the whole history of the world," and his political inability, or unwillingness, to do anything substantial about it, clashed tragically. Throughout the 1930's, his had been a lonely voice in English politics in insisting that a war against Nazi Germany would have to be fought. Now, at the head of the British war effort, he did not wish to stand accused of jeopardizing it for Jewish and Zionist interests. What he was able to do against little domestic opposition, he did—pressure the Franco government of Spain into admitting Jewish refugees from Vichy France, for example, or get officials in Palestine to allot unused White Paper quotas for the small number of Jews who had found refuge in Istanbul.

But the bigger things continued to elude him, though not always for lack of trying. He did not manage to repeal the White Paper itself, whose cancellation in time might have allowed hundreds of thousands of doomed Jews to escape Europe. He could not get his generals to agree to bomb the Nazi death camps or the rail lines leading to them. He was unable to persuade the British administration in Pales-

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Jerusalem (II)

Should the U.S. Embassy be moved to the capital of Israel?

In a previous clarifying message we showed that before the Six-Day War in 1967, the claim that Jerusalem was a Muslim/Arab city had seldom been asserted and that such claim had come about only in modern times. The status of Jerusalem continues to be of great importance. The Arabs clamorously insist that at least the eastern part of the city should be yielded to them. The Israelis insist that Jerusalem continue as the indivisible capital of their country.

What are the facts?

Jerusalem – reunited and indivisible. Ever since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, all American governments and Congress have confirmed their conviction that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and that, once reunited, it should remain indivisible.

Before the Six-Day War in 1967 the city was divided, the Jordanians having occupied the eastern part since the War of Liberation in 1948. During their 19-year reign, all Jewish residents were driven out and all Jewish places of worship closed or destroyed. The various Christian denominations operated under the strict control of Muslim authorities.

> "The status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state."

All this ended in 1967 with the liberation of all of Jerusalem by the Israel Defense Forces and with the reunification of the city. Access to all holy places became available to all. The many religious bodies in the holy city (and in all of Israel) are able to pursue their activities without any restrictions. Jerusalem is today truly a free and open city. Just as the whole world rejoiced when the ugly wall dividing Berlin was torn down, so do we rejoice that the wall, the barbed wire and the machine gun emplacements dividing the city were finally torn down.

U.S. Embassy not in Israel's capital. While the Palestinians lay claim to the eastern part of Jerusalem and wish it to become the capital of a hoped-for Palestinian state, nobody, not even the Arabs, questions the western part of the city to be Israeli. It is remarkable therefore that, despite this universal recognition, the United States has steadfastly insisted on placing and keeping its embassy in Tel Aviv, the major commercial city, instead of in Jerusalem, Israel's capital and the seat of the Knesset (parliament), the Supreme Court, and of all government offices. It is as if a government accredited to the United States were to insist on keeping its embassy in, say, New York, rather than in Washington D.C.

With the U.S. in the lead, all other countries have also located their embassies in Tel Aviv. It is a bizarre situation: All ambassadors and their staffs must make almost daily trips to Jerusalem, because no government business is conducted in Tel Aviv. The United States maintains diplomatic relations with over 150 countries. In all of them, the U.S. Embassy is located in the nation's designated capital. The only exception is Israel where, so far, our government has insisted on locating its embassy in a city other than the capital.

Congress in favor of moving embassy to Jerusalem. Despite the fact that, prior to their elections, both Presidents Bush and President Clinton assured the public that the U.S. Embassy would be moved to Israel's capital, the Administration has until now blocked all moves in that direction, declaring that it would jeopardize the so-called "final status" talks on Jerusalem.

Leaders of Congress – both Republican and Democratic – have introduced legislation by which the U.S. Embassy would have to be moved to Jerusalem within the next three or four years. And that was about ten years ago. That legislation has been endorsed by 93 senators. The U.S. has a lease on a 10-acre embassy lot in Talpiot, a totally Jewish neighborhood in West Jerusalem. It is to be hoped therefore that, before too long, reality will prevail and that the U.S. Embassy in Israel will indeed be located in Jerusalem – the capital of one of our country's closest allies. Three of the current Republican candidates to the presidency have promised that, if elected, they would move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem.

The main reason given for not moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem is that it would violate "Arab sensitivities." That might indeed be the case. But while there would be some posturing, none of the Arab states could afford to do much else. Egypt would certainly not refuse its yearly multi-billion dollar subsidy from Washington. King Abdullah of Jordan would not jeopardize the political and financial lifeline that the U.S. has extended to him. Saudi Arabia would make some perfunctory noises, but that would be just about all. The status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state. The move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem will signal once and for all that there will be no U.S. or world support for the division of Jerusalem and for the establishment – in any part of it – as the capital of a new Arab state.

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tine to arm the country's Jews against a possible German invasion from Egypt, or to convince the British army to create the sizable Jewish combat force that he envisioned fighting the Germans under its own flag—two steps that would also have aided Palestinian Jewry in preparing itself for its future war against the Arabs. And he failed to deliver on his promise of committing England to the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine once the war ended; after his electoral defeat by the Labor Party in 1945, he left office with the White Paper still intact and the British government about to revert to an anti-Zionist stance.

Nor did the pangs of conscience that Churchill felt at not having accomplished more for Zionism prevent him from continuing to oppose opening the gates of Palestine wide or from declaring in a 1946 debate in the House of Commons that it would be "really too silly" to suppose that there was "room in Palestine for the great masses of Jews who wish to leave Europe, or that they could be absorbed in any period which it is now useful to contemplate." Zionism was a just cause in his eyes and one that, in his fashion, he believed in, but it was only one among many, and he remained prepared to subordinate it to others that seemed more important or pressing. After the establishment of Israel, too, although his attitude toward it was cordial when he again became prime minister in 1951, and he viewed it as part of the U.S.-led anti-Soviet alliance that was paramount to him, he generally allowed his less pro-Israel foreign office and general staff to determine England's policies toward the Jewish state.

IT WAS precisely Churchill's verbal enthusiasm for Zionism, it would seem, that aroused expectations in Zionist circles that were, time and again, let down. He was a far greater disappointment in this respect than was Roosevelt, who never pretended to care much about Zionism and so was less resented for what he did not do. When, after the war, Churchill failed to honor his pledge to Weizmann to press for a Jewish state, Weizmann felt personally cheated. And yet the pledge was sincere; there had been nothing to be gained politically by making it. It was just that there was much to be gained politically by not keeping it, and Churchill was above all a politician.

As one, he was probably the best friend Jews could have hoped for in the England of his day and age. But the Jewish debt to him is everlasting less for anything he did for the Jewish people specifically than for what he did for England and the world. Without him at the English helm during the early, dark days of World War II, the entire campaign against Nazi Germany might have collapsed. In theory, America and Russia might have won the war against Hitler anyway. Practically speaking, this would have been all but impossible had England sued for peace when things looked bleakest. Churchill, more than anyone, was the reason it did not.

BETWEEN THEM, Gilbert and Makovsky's books draw a portrait of a man whose affinity for the Jews was already evident as a schoolboy ("Their faults were many," Gilbert quotes him as writing in an essay about the Pharisees, "but whose faults are few?") and eventually came to be integrated in a comprehensive view of the Jewish place in world history (in which, Makovsky cites Churchill as remarking, "the coming into being of a Jewish state in Palestine is an event to be viewed in the perspective, not of a generation or a century, but in the perspective of a thousand, two thousand, or even three thousand years").

If there is a lesson to be learned from *Churchill and the Jews* and *Churchill's Promised Land*, it is how in the end Zionism's fortunes depended almost entirely on its ability or failure to mobilize Jewish power. Ultimately, even a strongly pro-Zionist statesman like Churchill was not prepared to do the Zionists any favors that he did not think were in his or England's practical interest. Had the Jewish community in Palestine grown more rapidly in the 1920's and 30's, and the Jewish support for Zionism in the United States been stronger, he would have done more. (In British government debates over Palestine, Churchill always sought to play the card of American Jewry as effectively as he could, while complaining privately that U.S. Jews were not as solidly organized in Zionism's behalf as he would have liked them to be.) This is something to think about when the Walts and Mearsheimers fulminate about today's Jewish lobby. Churchill might have welcomed such a lobby in his own day. It might have enabled him to do what he always would have liked to do but never found a way of justifying to himself or his colleagues.

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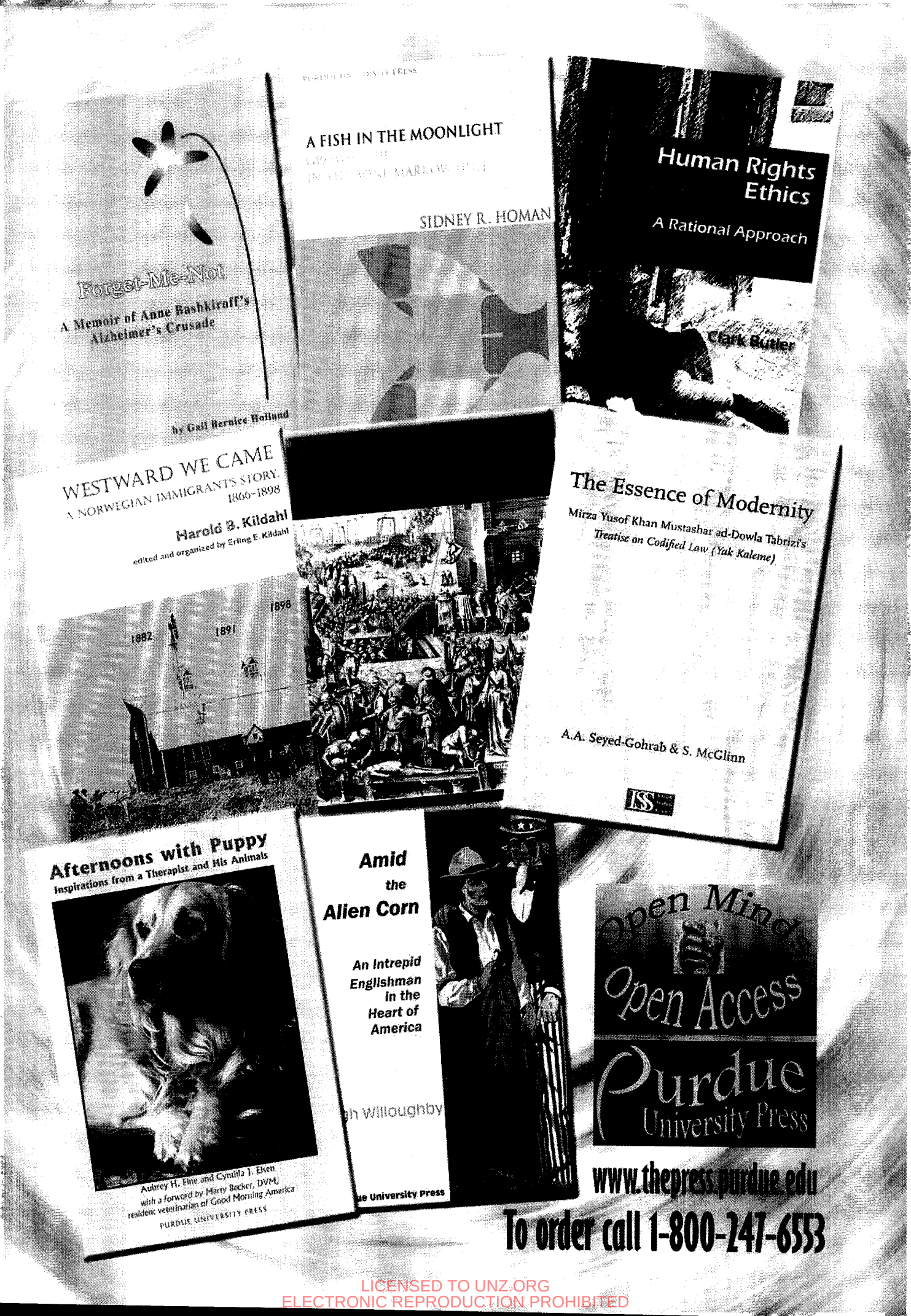

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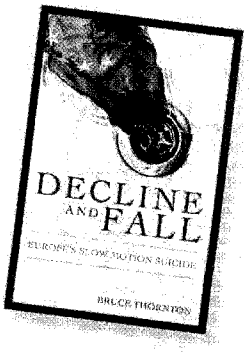

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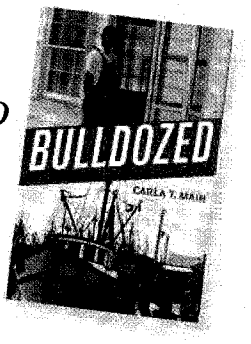

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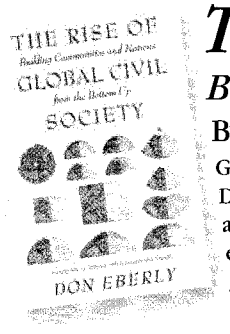

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